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Near East & South Asia

FBIS-NES-96-156
Monday
12 August 1996

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Daily Report
Near East & South Asia

FBIS-NES-96-156

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Inter-Arab Affairs

Inter-Arab Affairs: Libya Calls For Meeting on Israel's Weapons Programs

NC1108175296 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1725 GMT 11 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 11 Aug (MENA)—The Arab League Secretariat General today sent the member states the Libyan memorandum it received yesterday.

The Libyan memorandum called on the Arab League to hold an extraordinary ministerial council meeting to discuss Israel's establishment of factories to produce chemical and biological weapons and the dangers that these pose to pan-Arab security.

The Secretariat General will set a date for the council meeting in light of the responses it receives from the Arab states.

Inter-Arab Affairs: Arab, Western Efforts Against Terrorism Viewed

JN0908135096 Amman AL-BILAD in Arabic 7 Aug 96 p 9

[Report by Rakan al-Sa'ayidah]

[FBIS Translated Text] It looks like the threat of more terrorist bombings in different parts of the world, particularly in the Middle East, has pushed the U.S. Administration and certain of the region's countries into a corner. They are left with the expectation of more such operations that promise to bring about security and political instability that will ultimately produce widespread tension. As a result, the entire region will drift back to the specter of political breakdowns that will lead to a redrawing of the map by the U.S. Administration to suit its political and economic interests.

It is now clear that the Arab states, most of all Egypt, have grasped the danger the rapid succession of terrorist operations poses to the Arab states from a political and security standpoint, especially since the West has begun pointing fingers at several Arab states as being behind most of the terrorist operations around the world. In this context, references have been made more clearly than ever before to Iran, Syria, and Libya. Consequently, Western leaders and certain leaders in the region itself now see the necessity of formulating a firm policy to deal with these countries to forestall any terrorist activities that may be planned for the foreseeable future.

In an urgent step taken in compliance with his contacts with regional leaders and the U.S. leadership, President Husni Mubarak has called for convening a summit comparable to Sharm al-Shaykh to discuss the latest Arab and world developments in terms of terrorist operations and the progress in the implementation of the peacemakers' conference resolutions, which seem to have fallen short.

Arab and Western diplomatic sources report that Egyptian security agencies and government officials have, in cooperation with the security committee formed at the Sharm al-Shaykh summit, compiled a complete dossier that covers all the relevant developments since the conference. If another summit is convened, the dossier, the sources add, will be given to the leaders of the participating nations for them to discuss and then to work out appropriate solutions and to devise suitable measures. If convening a summit proves impossible — a highly unlikely prospect — the Egyptian Government will send copies of these dossiers to the governments of the countries concerned so they can see what Egypt has achieved on the security front. It is important that Egypt does this, because, according to our sources, the dossier packs a considerable body of information on Islamic and other movements that espouse the policy of military action. The dossier also sheds light on these groups' latest tactics and policies and includes Egypt's prognosis for future terrorist operations.

In this same context, and in the aftermath of the Atlanta bombing and the downing of the TWA airplane, the United States has decided that it cannot take any more terrorism and has realized the threat of more operations, and so it has asked the CIA to step up its efforts and contacts with Arab security agencies to salvage whatever can be salvaged from the probable devastation.

According to classified information, confirmed by various sources, U.S. intelligence crews have arrived in Arab capitals that are considered to be flash points. They went to American embassies to take a close look at the security situation and the way Arab security services handle security. This, of course, is in addition to the crews' principal mandate: the compilation of exhaustive files on the Islamist and other movements that are pursuing terrorist methods. The information is being gathered in preparation for charting sound strategies to deal with these groups. Indeed, the CIA men are already working on these measures with the help of host countries. The arrival of the CIA personnel coincides with an exchange of security files that began at a slow pace after the Sharm al-Shaykh summit, but it is now picking up speed after the security people began to sense that a cloud of instability is engulfing the region. These files, which contain a considerable amount of data, should prove an asset for policymakers before they take any countermeasures within the framework of an appropriate mechanism to tackle terrorists.

The recent G-7 summit in Paris to examine security and terrorism, in which the United States and the Russian Federation participated, represents the centerpiece of a terror combating effort. The summit participants drew up a list of 17 successive measures to combat terror and sponsors of terrorism.

In the Paris conference, the United States succeeded in forging a somewhat harmonious stance among the seven nations in relation to Syria, Iran, and Libya. This stance calls for stringent measures to be taken against the three states as the focus, source, and driving force of the majority of operations in the region and the world.

The Paris summit has, in the words of analysts, given the U.S. Administration the green light to follow the policies that best suit it. That will crystallize in tightening the siege on Libya and Iran and subjecting Syria to a siege, now that its name has been mentioned repeatedly in connection with it having been somehow involved in various acts of terror in the region, particularly in Saudi Arabia.

Driving Syria into a corner should certainly prove to be a considerable advantage to Israel when the two sides resume negotiations. Israel will use the subject of terrorism to extort maximum concessions from the Syrians. It is common knowledge that King Husayn's visit to and talks in Damascus addressed the subject of terrorism and looked into ways of helping Syria's position as it faces an effort to mire it in terrorism. And so will a projected summit in Egypt that groups President Hafiz al-Asad, Yasir 'Arafat, and President Husni Mubarak

Islamic Affairs

Political Islam Review: 'AQIDATI 30 Jul

NC1108081996

[FBIS Report] The following is a comprehensive review of all items in the 30 July edition of the Cairo Arabic language newspaper 'AQIDATI that pertain to political Islamic issues.

CONTENTS:

1. Writer Calls for All Out War on Terrorism
2. Al-Azhar Shaykh Says Doctors Have Final Say on Khitan
3. Lawsuit Against Khitan Fatwa Postponed to 12 October
4. World Islamic Body Urges Rescue of Jerusalem
5. IESCO Director Interviewed on Islamic Issues

WRITER CALLS FOR ALL OUT WAR ON TERRORISM

In a 300-word column on page 1, 'AQIDATI Board Director Samir Rajab says the "advocates of falsehood cannot distort the image of Islam," which has always been and will always be the religion of "tolerance, brotherhood, and mercy." He adds that "in the United States, there were attempts to blame Muslims for the recent bombings" there, although everybody knows that the perpetrators of these incidents belong to "domestic groups." Rajab says "this is not the way to confront terrorism. If Islam has some dissidents, so do other religions." He emphasizes that "terrorism has no religion." He concludes that the time has come for the world to unite and launch an all out war on terrorism. Beating around the bush and making accusations haphazardly serves no purpose at all.

AL-AZHAR SHAYKH SAYS DOCTORS HAVE FINAL SAY ON KHITAN

According to an unattributed 200-word report on page 1, Grand Shaykh of al-Azhar Dr. Muhammad Sayyid Tantawi has said that "doctors have the final say on whether to forbid or allow female circumcision," known in arabic as "khitan." He adds that if doctors say "this operation is harmful," then it must be stopped. If they say it is not harmful, then "the Health Ministry must take all legal measures to ensure that this operation takes place in a way that provides privacy, decency, and human dignity and that preserves for a girl her feminism." Tantawi says there is no clear and correct shari'ah text sanctioning female circumcision, which he describes as an old custom that is gradually being abandoned by most Islamic countries.

LAWSUIT AGAINST KHITAN FATWA POSTPONED TO 12 OCTOBER

A 100-word unattributed report on page 2 says the compensation department of a South Cairo court has postponed to 12 October a lawsuit filed by the Egyptian Organization for Human Rights against a fatwa issued by late Grand Imam of Al-Azhar Jad-al-Haq 'Ali Jad-al-Haq sanctioning female circumcision.

WORLD ISLAMIC BODY URGES RESCUE OF JERUSALEM

An unattributed 150-word report on page 1 says the World Islamic Council for Call and Relief on 29 July appealed to Muslim rulers and peoples to get prepared to resist aggression on their holy places and to declare to the world that there can be no peace without the return of Jerusalem and al-Aqsa Mosque to Arab and Islamic rule.

IESCO DIRECTOR INTERVIEWED ON ISLAMIC ISSUES

On pages 20 and 21, the newspaper publishes a 1,500-word interview with Dr. 'Abd-al-'Aziz Al-Tuwajri, director general of the Islamic Education, Science, and Culture Organization [IESCO]. The interview was conducted by Chief Editor al-Sayyid 'Abd-al-Ra'uf at 'AQIDATI offices in Cairo. No date is given.

Asked about the challenges facing the Muslims on the threshold of the 21st Century, Tuwajri says before exploring the future of the Muslims, we must examine their current situation. He says several Islamic countries have a high rate of illiteracy, which obstructs their progress and development. The Islamic World lacks industrial and technological capability. The advanced industrial world is years ahead of us in know-how and expertise. Tuwajri says the Muslims can only face the challenges of the 21st Century if they act in unity and unison. He adds that we must change our outlook toward events. Ideas that were suitable in the 14th Century are not applicable in the 21st Century. Yes, there are constants that cannot be changed, but there are many things in Islamic thought and culture that can be changed. He warns Muslims against entering the 21st century with their feuds and differences. Asked about IESCO's stance on the new Israeli Government under Binyamin Netanyahu, Tuwajri says he is optimistic by nature. But he is pessimistic about the "new regime in Israel and its narrow and fanatic religious mentality." He cites as an example the Israeli Government's decision to allow "Jewish extremists to pray in the courtyard of al- Aqsa Mosque." He deplores the fact that no Islamic body or quarter has denounced this decision. He adds that Muslims will never accept Israel's claim that Jerusalem is its eternal capital. "What the U.S. Congress approves or decides regarding Jerusalem concerns that congress alone, because it cannot impose its decision on the whole Islamic world." Asked about the foreign "cultural invasion" of Muslim Countries, Tuwajri says foreign language schools opened by foreign missionaries in several Arab capitals are used for proselytizing. Asked how modern means of communications can be used to spread Islam, he regrets that there is no satellite channel dedicated to spreading the concepts and ideals of Islam. He urges the rich of the Islamic world to adopt this project, particularly as it has become an urgent need in view of the challenges facing Muslim minorities in certain countries. He says "it saddens me that a small deviating group called al-Qadyaniyah possesses a satellite channel and presents Islam in a distorted way." The West knows only the Islam presented by this channel, he concludes.

Political Islam Review: AL-NUR 31 Jul

NC0908124496

[FBIS Report] The following is a comprehensive review of all items in the 31 July edition of the Cairo Arabic language newspaper AL-NUR that pertain to political Islamic issues.

CONTENTS:

1. Jihad Seen as Alternative to Deadlocked Arab-Israeli Talks
2. Islamic Ulema Urge Halt to Normalization With Israel
3. Mubarak Urged To Stick to Arab Rights During U.S. Visit
4. Paper Comments on Pope John Paul II's Visit to Sarajevo
5. U.S. Media Urged To Stop 'Unjust' Accusations Against Muslims
6. Rational Dealing With 'Secularist' Writers Urged

JIHAD SEEN AS ALTERNATIVE TO DEADLOCKED ARAB-ISRAELI TALKS

In a 2,500-word report on page 3, Ahmad al-Nahhas cites a number of Islamic professors giving their opinion on whether jihad is the alternative to the deadlocked peace talks between the Arabs and Israel. Islamic thinker Dr. Ahmad al-Laythi laments the fact that Muslim generations are not being brought up on the values and significance of jihad. He says official proclamation of jihad is the right of the head of state, but the Muslim nation must be well-prepared for it. He urges Muslim leaders to encourage the spirit of jihad and to be cautious in their dealings with Israel, which, he says, is working against the political, economic, and cultural interests of the Arab nation.

Islamic preacher Dr. 'Abd-al-Sabur Shahin attacks television and other media and artistic productions in Egypt wondering if dancing, singing, and acting produce a mujahid nation. He charges that such "miserable" media production is meant to undermine the spirit of jihad in the nation and that it helps the designs of "terrorist" Netanyahu. He maintains that jihad is the duty of every individual in Muslim society, and he condemns every Muslim leader who obstructs the march of jihad.

Al-Azhar professor Dr. Ahmad Taha Rayyan explains that jihad is practiced only when the nation is strong enough to do it and that no small group of individuals should engage in jihad against a much stronger enemy.

Al-Azhar professor Dr. Muhammad Ra'fat 'Uthman maintains that if any Islamic territory is seized, Muslims must struggle to liberate it, militarily or in any other way. He adds: "Under the current circumstances, it is wise to conclude a peace treaty between the Palestinians and the Israelis until Muslims become strong enough to regain all of Palestine." He says attacks against Israeli civilians are not jihad and have nothing to do with Islam. He adds that the Islamic nation is not able to practice jihad now.

Jordanian thinker Jawad 'Afanah is cited as saying that an Islamic state must be established before jihad is proclaimed. He adds: "The suicide operations carried out by some people against Israel are useless because they are basically directed against civilians. Maybe these people [the suicide bombers] are doing it as a service to the Zionist enemy in return for a few dollars."

ISLAMIC ULEMA URGE HALT TO NORMALIZATION WITH ISRAEL

A 200-word report by 'Ali Sabir on page 1 cites some of the recommendations of the Eighth International Conference of the Higher Council for Islamic Affairs, recently held in Cairo. The conference reportedly called on Arab leaders to stop all forms of normalization with Israel until Jerusalem is liberated and an Islamic state is established. The conference also stressed that the question of Jerusalem and the Palestinian cause are the most important issues that hinder peaceful coexistence in the region. It said the future of the Islamic holy places in Jerusalem and Hebron concern all Muslims, not only the Palestinians.

MUBARAK URGED TO STICK TO ARAB RIGHTS DURING U.S. VISIT

The newspaper's 1,000-word editorial on page one, signed by Board Chairman al-Hamzah Di'bis, urges President Mubarak, on the eve of his visit to the United States, to make it clear to the American president that the Arabs will not abandon a single inch of their occupied territories. Di'bis says: We are for peace, the peace that maintains our rights as enshrined in Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338.

Di'bis tells Mubarak that all Muslims support him in these demands. He says if the Israelis fail to meet them, then Mubarak should lead the "faithful" and prepare everything necessary to confront the enemy, relying on God's help and promise of victory.

PAPER COMMENTS ON POPE JOHN PAUL II'S VISIT TO SARAJEVO

At the end of a front-page report on Pope John Paul II's plan to visit Sarajevo, the newspaper offers the following comment: "This is the second visit by the Vatican's pope to Sarajevo, which was destroyed by the pope's followers in the Balkans and their supporters throughout Europe. If the pope, the representative of Christianity, is eager to visit Muslim-dominated Bosnia, does this country and its steadfast people not deserve a similar visit by the representative of Islam and Muslims, the grand imam of al-Azhar?"

U.S. MEDIA URGED TO STOP 'UNJUST' ACCUSATIONS AGAINST MUSLIMS

A brief report on page one says that CNN broadcast a program on terrorism and the security measures during the Olympic games in Atlanta, while the sound of the call for Islamic prayers played in the background. The newspaper offers the following comment at the end of the report: "When will American print and broadcast media stop their unjust and tendentious accusations against Islam and stop linking Islam with terrorism? Have they not learned from the experience of the Oklahoma bombing, when they rushed to accuse Muslims of being the perpetrators? Muslims were proved innocent, and American terrorists were found to be behind the bombing. We praise God that the initial investigations have shown that a white American was behind the Atlanta bombing last week. If they had not discovered this, they would have accused Arabs and Muslims as usual."

RATIONAL DEALING WITH 'SECULARIST' WRITERS URGED

An 800-word article by Mustafa 'Abd-al-Raziq on page 6 says the best way to deal with secularist writers and intellectuals who write against Islam is to ignore their works. The writer urges the authorities not to resort to confiscation of books seen as anti-Islamic except in extreme cases. He says this is necessary to prevent anti-Islam secularists from gaining publicity and to deny the enemies of Islam a chance to claim that Islam is against freedom of opinion.

—In a 1,500-word article on page 12, Mustafa Khalifah criticizes Dr. Jabir 'Asfur, director general of the Higher Council for Culture, for a recent article he wrote, which Khalifah viewed as part of the secularists' "escalating campaign" against Islam. Khalifah cites passages from 'Asfur's article saying they show "his strong hatred for Islamic heritage".

Political Islam Review: AL-SHA'B 2 Aug

NC1008091796

[FBIS Report] The following is a comprehensive review of all items in the 2 August edition of the Cairo Arabic language newspaper AL-SHA'B that pertain to political Islamic issues.

CONTENTS:

1. Report Reviews Washington's Pressures on Egypt
2. Clinton Asks Mubarak To Work With Israel Against Terrorism
3. Majdi Husayn Claims Two Interior Ministry Cars Are Following Him
4. Israeli Tourists to Egypt Increase by 15 Percent
5. Labor Party Leader Speaks During Prophet's Birthday Celebrations
6. Al-Wasat Party Members' Trial Final Session Detailed
7. 'Adil Husayn Comments on Sudan Efforts To Prospect for Oil
8. Writer Notes Negative Effects of Peace on Jordan

REPORT REVIEWS WASHINGTON'S PRESSURES ON EGYPT

Muhammad Jamal 'Arafah and Rabi' Shahin write a 1000-word report on pages one and eight in which they discuss the pressures Washington is applying on Egypt, on such issues as aid, the scud missiles, and relations with al-Qadhdhafi. The report discusses President Mubarak's visit to Washington and talks with U.S. officials in Congress and elsewhere, during which "they made their regular attempts to put pressure on Egypt through the military aid, the scud missile crisis, and even by raising the issue that al-Qadhdhafi flew into Cairo for the summit, thus breaking the international siege imposed on Libya." Egypt managed to counter-argue the first issue, saying that it was ready to have its aid decreased provided the same applies to Israel. Regarding the scud missile issue, Egypt threatened to raise the issue of Israel's nuclear weapons. The al-Qadhdhafi issue was dismissed by Clinton himself when a journalist raised it at the joint news conference with Mubarak. To conclude, the report says: "Informed sources noted that Mubarak briefed Clinton of the dangers of the Israeli Government's policy under the Likud leadership and its adoption of policies that could bring tension back to the region and create a fertile atmosphere for terrorism to grow."

CLINTON ASKS MUBARAK TO WORK WITH ISRAEL AGAINST TERRORISM

Another related 250-word report by Mahmud Bakri, also on page one, notes that Clinton asked Mubarak during their talks in Washington to "intensify efforts together with Israel to put an end to the operations the Islamic fundamentalists are carrying out against Israel's security, the region, and U.S. and western interests in it." Clinton believes a series of firm deterrent measures should be taken against all violent groups or countries that host them, the report says.

MAJDI HUSAYN CLAIMS TWO INTERIOR MINISTRY CARS ARE FOLLOWING HIM

A 100-word report on page one cites Majdi Husayn, chief editor of AL-SHA'B newspaper, saying that he recently noticed two cars following him around, one a Cherokee Jeep and the other a Peugeot. These are the two types of cars the Interior Ministry uses, the report says. A team of editors from AL-SHA'B newspaper are still tracking down the criminals who attacked the chief editor earlier.

ISRAELI TOURISTS TO EGYPT INCREASE BY 15 PERCENT

A 50-word report on page one by Layla 'Abd-al-Hamid says that the rate of Israeli tourism to Egypt has risen by 15 percent this year. The second highest increase is among Syrian tourists.

LABOR PARTY LEADER SPEAKS DURING PROPHET'S BIRTHDAY CELEBRATIONS

Page four carries a 4000-word report by Jamal Imbabi on a speech Labor Party Leader Ibrahim Shukri delivered during the Madinat 15 Mayu celebrations of the Prophet's Birthday. In his speech, he advocates adherence to the principles of Islam and the Prophet's teachings. On the subject of the dangers of foreign aid to Egypt, Shukri warns against dependence on U.S. wheat. He says: "What is squandered on frivolities could be saved and not taken in the form of aid." He also warns that smoking is dangerous because it promotes the sale of foreign cigarettes. He comments on the bad quality of bread in Madinat 15 Mayu and promises to convey the residents' grievance to the minister of supply. Other Labor Party officials also spoke during the celebrations.

AL-WASAT PARTY MEMBERS' TRIAL FINAL SESSION DETAILED

Page four also carries a 4000-word report by Qutb al-'Arabi and Dawud Hasan on the final session of the court case against al-Wasat Party and Muslim Brothers' prisoners. The report details procedures, arguments, and counter-arguments presented during the case. Some witnesses, who had previously given testimony, changed their statements and said they knew nothing about the case. One line of defense raised during the session is that if the defendants are accused of having departed from the Muslim Brotherhood line to establish the al-Wasat Party, then "they have actually retracted from the 'crime' of belonging to the Muslim Brotherhood, and should not be punished or accused of anything." The report then details the defense arguments presented by the defendants themselves.

'ADIL HUSAYN COMMENTS ON SUDAN EFFORTS TO PROSPECT FOR OIL

'Adil Husayn writes a 3500-word article on page five in which he discusses a new oil well dug in Sudan. Husayn is in Khartoum and reviews the background of oil prospecting in Sudan, with the American oil company Chevron. He notes that the Sudanese people worked very hard to activate the oil well, after foreign companies abandoned the project.

WRITER NOTES NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF PEACE ON JORDAN

Muhammad Jamal 'Arafah writes a 400-word "Development of Events" column on page seven, entitled "The Benefits of Peace with Israel." The writer opens his column with the following ironic statement: "As we in Egypt benefited from peace with Israel, where unemployment increased and bread prices went up, so too has Jordan started to reap the benefits recently." The columnist laments the queues of Jordanian youths outside the Israeli Embassy in Amman who are waiting to get visas to work in Israel. He notes the recent lifting of the subsidy on bread, which caused much anger in Jordan and that the government tried hard to absorb. He concludes, ironically, that the benefits of peace continue to flow to Jordan, "where the Zionists have refused to provide Jordan with 50 million cubic meters of water that were originally stolen from Jordan, despite the fact that the peace treaty between them stipulated that they should do so."

Palestinian Affairs

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Interviewed on Israeli TV on Peace, Israel

TA1108185396 Jerusalem Israel Television Channel 1 Network in Hebrew 1745 GMT 11 Aug 96

[Interview with Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasir 'Arafat by Ya'el Dan on 8 August in Gaza — recorded, in English with Hebrew subtitles; transcribed from the English; italicized passages translated from Hebrew]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] [Dan]*Good evening. Since his arrival in Gaza and even before, Yasir 'Arafat has refused to be interviewed by the Israeli media. The numerous requests, including mine, were always turned down. On 8 August, he consented for the first time — quite possibly because he felt he had no choice but to try to reach the Israeli public. He was surrounded by advisers throughout the interview, which was held in his office in Gaza. He was very careful when answering some of the questions. Here is 'Abd-al- Rahman 'Abd-al-Ra'uf 'Arafat al-Qudwah al-Husayni — that is his full name — in this first interview, which may herald the start of a dialogue between him and the Israeli media.*

Chairman 'Arafat, thank you for the invitation. Next month, it's going to be three years since the signing of the agreement in Washington. I think from that date what I remember mostly is the hesitation, the tremendous difficulty that Rabin had to shake your hand. Was it difficult for you, too, although it didn't show?

['Arafat] We can say it is difficult, but it was a historical moment.

[Dan] But was it difficult for you to shake his hand as it was for him?

['Arafat] No. For me it wasn't difficult; it was historical. Do you know why? Because we had decided to make this peace.

[Dan] Signing this agreement and since then, you have taken lots of very difficult and, I should say, brave decisions. Do you regret any of it? I think from even your point of view, you should regret the fact that you didn't do enough to prevent the horrible terroristic attacks that happened in Israel and maybe were the reason — one of the reasons — for the political upset in Israel.

['Arafat] Look, let us speak frankly. We have done all what we can do. And you can ask....

[Dan, interrupting] Not from the beginning.

['Arafat] No, from the beginning. Not to forget that we had started in very, very difficult conditions, because when we had arrived, all we had received — our territories, all our infrastructures — had been completely destroyed. And we are starting from there from everything. You have to remember that we are doing all our best, but we can't give 100 percent. We are doing 100 percent of effort, but we can't give 100 percent results. No one.... [pauses] Even Prime Minister Netanyahu had mentioned that he had discovered from his intelligence services that we are doing our best.

[Dan] Is it true that you considered resigning after the elections in Israel? Is it true?

['Arafat] Me?

[Dan] Yes, it was written in DER SPIEGEL, I think, the German....

['Arafat, interrupting] Me? To resign?

[Dan] Is it true?

['Arafat] Why?

[Dan] Because of this disappointment, maybe a feeling of despair about what's going to happen with the peace process.

['Arafat] I had been elected with a democratic way. We have to respect a democracy of the others. I'm not dealing with one party or two parties; I'm dealing with the Israeli people and with any government they are choosing.

[Dan] Do you have a channel of communication now with Netanyahu?

['Arafat] Not to forget: Recently, I met Mr. David Levi.

[Dan] Which is not very strong, as far as Netanyahu is concerned.

['Arafat] When he came to see me, he is the minister of foreign affairs. Mr. Peres used to come to see me when he was the minister of foreign affairs. General Baraq used to come to see me when he was the minister of foreign affairs.

[Dan] Are you saying that you can work with this government the same way that you worked....

['Arafat, interrupting] I am dealing with the government which the Israelis had chosen, and we have to respect their choice.

[Dan] Now I want to ask you: What are you going to do if this government is not going to fulfill the decision to redeploy in Hebron? What are you going to do? What are you going to do if the settlements will expand?

['Arafat] You have to remember that this agreement is not a bilateral agreement; this agreement is international agreement. Oslo 1 and Oslo 2 had been signed under the supervision of President Clinton, and another agreement had been signed under the supervision of President Mubarak.

[Dan] So you rely on the world that will help you. Is that what you are saying?

['Arafat] Not help me — help both of us, because peace is not a Palestinian need only. It is Israeli need; it is Arab need; it is international need. To accept or not to accept — this is the facts and realities.

[Dan] What power do you have now, since you gave up terror, since you gave up violence?

['Arafat] Do you think my power is from terror? Not to forget, I have been elected by the Palestinian people; I am representing the Palestinian people, and I had been elected in the PNC [Palestine National Council] also. Not only that: I am not alone. Our Palestinian people are with us; the Arab world leaders are with us.

[Dan] Chairman 'Arafat, I want to go further. Tell me: We all know that you are not going to be satisfied with what was agreed upon in Oslo. You do want a Palestinian state with Jerusalem as a capital city, right?

['Arafat] With East Jerusalem.

[Dan] You do want it, right?

['Arafat] This is the holy place.

[Dan] I know. Did you get any promise from any Israeli, any promise concerning Jerusalem?

['Arafat] No.

[Dan] Nothing at all?

['Arafat] But we had agreed upon, and there is a letter of guarantees from the American Administration, since we went to Madrid, that Jerusalem has to be left for the final discussion. I have mentioned many times, many times: Why we can't repeat the same example of Rome — Rome, the capital of two states?

[Dan] Did you have good reason to believe that Shim'on Peres will divide Jerusalem?

['Arafat] I am not speaking about persons; I am speaking about what had been agreed upon: that Jerusalem is a part of the agreement since Shamir had accepted to go to Madrid.

[Dan] You know, Israelis are afraid that the minute that you don't get Palestinian state or Jerusalem, you will go back to terror.

['Arafat] Why terror? Why you are calling it terror? Why terror?

[Dan] Or any violent actions.

['Arafat] No. Look, there are two ways: either this confrontation — and it is not only confrontation between Palestinians and the Israelis — either this confrontation to continue between Israel and Arabs, or to carry on with the peace. No other alternatives. And you have to understand what is the meaning of the communique which had been declared after the Arab summit conference, the recent Arab summit conference [which] took place in Cairo, in which they had mentioned and stressed the peace process.

[Dan] You talk about the peace process, but you have never neglected the terminology of jihad and all the....

['Arafat, interrupting] And you can't forget the terminology of some fanatic groups in Israel who are speaking about Greater Israel from the Nile to the Euphrates. We are not speaking about this terminology; we are speaking about the language of the new era.

[Dan] But how can it be accepted when they feel that you speak in two languages?

['Arafat] Where? Give me two languages I have mentioned.

[Dan] It's as if you speak in one way to the politicians and then, when you speak to your people, you speak differently, you speak....

['Arafat, interrupting] Give me, give me [an example].

[Dan] You speak about jihad, you praise....

['Arafat, interrupting] Jihad. You don't know.... [pauses] Look, I am not understanding....

[Dan, interrupting] I will give you one more example: You mentioned lately 'Ayyash, and you praised him as a hero. How do you want us to trust you when you speak like that?

['Arafat] You have to understand what the meaning of the jihad. Building the state, building the welfare of the human beings — it is the jihad. But you gave slogan: Abu-'Ammar [Yasir 'Arafat] is using jihad, jihad, jihad. You have to understand our terminology!

[Dan] I can't understand your....

['Arafat, interrupting] I am understanding your terminology, and you have to understand our terminology as I am understanding your terminology.

[Dan] 'Ayyash — you praised him as a hero.

['Arafat] Because I can't accept the way of killing him. I can't accept, to speak frankly. Not only that; you had other persons had been killed also by bombs, by explosion. And where another one who had been killed here, in Gaza — Quhayl? Not only him had been killed; many others beside him had been killed with big explosion. I can't accept this activity. Terror against terror? No. You have to give me the chance to arrest him and to offer him to the courts.

[Dan] You wanted us to wait for you to stop 'Ayyash? You didn't do it.

['Arafat] So you make terror against terror? This is more pressure than anything else. When the massacres had done in the mosque of Hebron, I continued the peace process.

[Dan] And you can do it with Netanyahu?

['Arafat] He is trying to avoid to meet me now.

[Dan] He will meet you soon?

['Arafat] I am the most important figure in the Middle East's dilemma, in the Middle East equation.

[Dan] How come your people who follow you, who trust you, who support you, threaten to go back to the intifadah and the terror?

['Arafat] Why?! Why you are speaking about intifadah? Why? Again, why? This mean that you are insisting that you will not continue to implement what had been agreed upon and what had been signed?

[Dan] Your people mention the intifadah, the possibility of going back to the intifadah.

['Arafat] What do you expect from those who are facing confiscation of land every day? They are eating from this land. We are not rich like you. We haven't billions donations from the American Administration like you. You are one of the richest countries all over the world — one of the richest! Your income is parallel to those of one of the very small, limited countries all over the world! And you are confiscating the land which our farmers are eating. Can't you imagine that the closure is causing a tragedy for our people? Can't you imagine that more than 60 percent unemployed here in Gaza and more than 45 percent unemployed in the West Bank? I would like to ask any Israeli how he can face himself alone, himself alone, while his neighbor is facing starvation.

[Dan] You know, listening to you I could think that maybe you will support going back to the intifadah.

['Arafat] No! But we have to be very careful.

[Dan] You will understand it.

['Arafat] You have to be very careful. Before me, that closure and the starvation.... [pauses] We had arrived here in Gaza to the red line of starvation from the closure.

[Dan] But can you make me sure that if the closure will be canceled there will be no terror attacks in Israel by the Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement]? Can you give me the guarantee?

['Arafat] Can you give me guarantee that no terrorist activities will be done from Kahana Hay or from EYAL [Irgun Yehudi Lohem] movement? No massacre in Hebron?

[Dan] They never did such attacks....

['Arafat, interrupting] No massacre in Hebron? No massacre in Jerusalem? Do you know how many had been killed? The PNC had voted — and it was not easy target — to change the covenant. It was not a play; it was very difficult for me.

[Dan] Netanyahu is not very happy with it right now.

['Arafat] It's something else, but all over the world I had received congratulations after the success which we had achieved by changing the charter, the items in the covenant which is contradicting with the peace process and the relations between the Palestinians and the Israelis according to this.

[Dan] What will happen if, God forbid, you will be assassinated? Who will take your place? What will happen?

['Arafat] When Rabin had been assassinated, everything had collapsed in Israel? Why you are only looking for me as a special case and not remembering your situation as an example?

[Dan] When was it more dangerous for you: before Oslo agreement or now? When were you afraid for your life more: then or now?

['Arafat] To speak frankly? Never, at any time, I was afraid.

[Dan] Realty? You've never had these feelings of fear?

['Arafat] Do you know why? I am a strong believer; I believe in God.

[Dan] Many of your friends were killed.

['Arafat] Yes. When my turn will arrive, no one can stop it. This is part of my religion. When it arrive, no one can stop it.

[Dan] What was the hardest moment for you in your life?

['Arafat] The hardest moment? When I had decided to follow up with the peace process, because it was a big one.

[Dan] To sign it?

['Arafat] Not to sign, to go to Madrid. It wasn't easy, but after that, after many discussions in the Palestinian leadership, we had agreed upon by majority but not unanimously.

[Dan] I could think of the hard time you had in Lebanon during the war.

['Arafat] No, it wasn't hard time. You can ask Sharon. It wasn't hard time for me.

[Dan] Really?

['Arafat, smiling] You remember when I was playing chess? For me, it wasn't hard days. You remember, Sharon had mentioned that he was following me to assassinate me 13 times, yes?

[Dan] Yes.

['Arafat] But this no one can decide; only the God who decide it.

[Dan] You never slept in the same bed at that time.

['Arafat] It was nothing for me. Not one day, not three days, not one month, not three months.

[Dan] Did you have fun?

['Arafat] For me, it is simple and clear.

[Dan] People in Israel find it very hard to forget the fact that you are responsible for the death of lots of innocent people in Israel.

['Arafat] And also we can't forget — if we have to return back to memories — we can't forget our tragedy as Palestinians, the exodus. You had suffered from the exodus, but you have to remember the exodus for the Palestinians, you have to remember what happened in Beirut.

[Dan] Still, many people in Israel don't trust you. They see you as a terrorist. They say it in the government, in the Knesset.

['Arafat] Why they had trusted al-Sadat? Al-Sadat was fighting against you. When he was with me, he was my friend, for your information. When it was me and him, together, in 1948. In 1948, me and him were together. In 1948, me and him were together. Why you trusted al-Sadat? And why all the Labor Party and the Likud Party, all the Labor government and the Likud government, had trusted him? Why? He was fighting against you from the beginning, when he was an officer in the Egyptian Army.

[Dan] That's exactly what I am asking you: How come they trusted him and they don't trust you? What is the problem with you? Why do people in Israel still not trust you?

['Arafat] What you are speaking is not true, because the majority of the Israeli people are trusting me. The majority of the Israeli people are trusting me because they are with the peace process.

[Dan] Tell me, how come you became....

['Arafat, interrupting] And for your information, in the Likud Party now, in this government, many of them are with the peace process.

[Dan] How come you became the one and only leader for the Palestinians? How did it happen? What was your secret power? What is your secret of survival?

['Arafat] This is the choice of my people, not my choice.

[Dan] I am looking for an explanation. Maybe it's because you are the only one of your friends, as far as I know, that really dedicated his whole life for this purpose. You didn't do nothing since you were 16, I guess, nothing except working for the revolution.

['Arafat] But I had been accompanied with many of my colleagues.

[Dan] Lately, you did what most of your friends did years ago: You got married, and you have a little daughter — a lovely daughter; I saw her. How come you decided to have finally a family?

['Arafat] True, I was trying to marry many times in my life, but I failed, because the circumstances which were around me was not suitable.

[Dan] Wasn't it because you said you were married to the revolution?

['Arafat] And I'm still marrying for the sake of my people, and I am still working. You can ask Suha. She is complaining every day because I used to imagine that at 0200, after midnight, I used to go to my house. Can you imagine? It is very difficult. I know how she is suffering.

[Dan] So she is your second wife, right?

['Arafat] Still, she is my second wife. My first wife is my people.

[Dan] And what place does your daughter take?

['Arafat] I will tell you a story. He brought her to me in my office here....

[Dan, interrupting] And you did not recognize her. Shame on you!

['Arafat] Yes, I didn't recognize that she is my daughter. I told him: Who is this girl with you?

[Dan] You know what? I don't believe you, because I heard from the nanny of your daughter how wonderfully you play with your daughter.

['Arafat] Yes, but when he brought her, I don't know that she was my daughter. For your information, I had adopted 28 children.

[Dan] But in what way having your own family changed your life, the way you look at life?

['Arafat] Look, I have a very big family. I had adopted 28 children who had lost their fathers, and we don't know their fathers. For this I gave them my name.

[Dan] Aren't you tired? Don't you want to have more time to enjoy these kids in your family?

['Arafat] The most important thing is that we have to work hard to achieve real peace for the future of our children. Every one of you had lost the same as we lost, and for this we are calling it — and I am insisting to call it — the peace of the brave.

[Dan] I think it's going to be my last question. What is it that you want us and think that we have to know about you which we don't?

['Arafat] You have to know that I am respecting my parole d'honneur. [Words indistinct] I was working, and when I went to the United Nations saying that I am carrying the olive branch, I was looking to achieve real peace.

[Dan] I am asking you: What do you want us to know about you as a person?

['Arafat] The person? That I am person struggling for the peace of the brave.

[Dan] Something more personal can you give me?

['Arafat] Personal? Do you think there is more precious than this target?

[Dan] I think I learned something about you today: You never just listen. When I came to your office, you never just listened. You write and you read and you listen at the same time.

['Arafat] And I am using the phone. [laughing] This became a part of my life; this became a part of my life. I am working hard.

[Dan] Thank you very much, Chairman 'Arafat.

['Arafat] Thank you.

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Returns Home, Reacts to Netanyahu's Remarks

JN1108193096 Gaza Palestinian Broadcasting Corporation Television Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 11 Aug 96

[Announcer-read report over video; italicized passages are in English]

[FBIS Translated Text] President Yasir 'Arafat returned to the homeland in God's care this evening following a visit to Egypt.

During the visit, 'Arafat held talks with Egyptian President Husni Mubarak and chaired the Fatah Central Committee meetings.

In an arrival statement, President 'Arafat said they discussed the recent developments of the peace process and the need to confront the challenges preventing its continuation.

His Excellency President 'Arafat asserted that the Palestinian people are determined to achieve their objective of establishing an independent Palestinian state with holy Jerusalem as its capital.

[Begin recording] [Correspondent] *In the Fatah meetings, have you discussed a reevaluation of the peace process?*

['Arafat] *No doubt. We have discussed all the situation, all the political situation on the Palestinian field, on the Arab field, on the international field.*

[Correspondent] *Mr. Netanyahu today in AL-QUDS newspaper described, you know, that the final negotiations will lead to Palestinian entity, and he does not mention a state.*

['Arafat] *It is not his business. This is my business, and the Palestinian people business. We will achieve our goal for independent Palestinian state.*[end recording]

Palestinian Affairs: 'Arafat Refuses To Meet Mordekhay Before Netanyahu

TA1208054896 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0400 GMT 12 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Senior Palestinian officials have passed on a message to Jerusalem that Palestinian Authority [PA] head 'Arafat is not interested in meeting senior Israeli cabinet ministers, including Defense Minister Yitzhaq Mordekhay. The message says that 'Arafat believes that he should meet only with Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu himself. 'Arafat is said not to be in a rush, however, to meet with the premier because he believes that the United States, Egypt, and Jordan will pressure Netanyahu to do so. In that case, the PA head believes, he would not owe Netanyahu some sort of gesture for having held the meeting.

A Qol Yisra'el reporter quotes Defense Minister Mordekhay's media adviser as saying that no meeting has been set up for this week between the defense minister and the Palestinian leader.

Palestinian Affairs: Official Denies Report of PNC Speaker's Resignation

JN1008185296 Gaza Palestinian Broadcasting Corporation Television Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 10 Aug 96

[Announcer-read report]

[FBIS Translated Text] Akram al-Jaru, director of the Palestine National Council [PNC] office in Gaza, denied a report published by some local newspapers today that says that PNC Speaker Salim al-Za'nun has resigned. He said this report is totally unfounded.

Akram al-Jaru said al-Za'nun apologized for not attending the Fatah Central Committee meeting in Cairo today for compelling reasons.

Palestinian Affairs: Fatah Official Says Plan Devised To Confront Israel

NC1108083996 Cairo MENA in English 0620 GMT 11 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Cairo, 11 Aug (MENA)—The Central Committee of Fatah Movement held a meeting in Cairo yesterday under Palestinian leader Yasir 'Arafat.

'Abbas Zaki, the member of the Central Committee, told AL-AHRAM that the Committee drafted a full plan in order to confront Israeli abusive practices and protecting the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people.

The Palestinian official said call for reviving Palestinian uprising would rest on what could be done by the other party.

He was quoted by AL-AHRAM as saying the Committee would discuss Israeli practices against the Palestinian people such as lifting the ban on expanding settlement in the west bank and Gaza Strip.

He said the Committee would further address israeli measures to judaize Jerusalem and to obliterate its Arab and Islamic identity.

Palestinian Affairs: Fatah Member Denies Conflict Between 'Arafat, Qaddumi

NC1108165496 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1553 GMT 11 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 11 Aug (MENA)—Meetings of the Fatah Movement's Central Committee, the largest of the Palestinian groups, ended here today. The meetings were chaired by Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat, who left Cairo earlier today.

Committee member 'Abbas Zaki told MENA that the committee has decided to draw up a plan for the movement's future actions to be approved at the next meeting. He added that this plan will be a comprehensive political and organizational action plan for all spheres of action.

He denied that there are differences between President 'Arafat and Faruq Qaddumi, committee member and head of the PLO's political department.

Responsible Palestinian sources said that President 'Arafat met today at his residence in al-Andalus Palace with Egyptian Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa and briefed him on the outcome of the committee's meetings.

Palestinian Affairs: Fatah Reportedly Rejects Gradual Pullout From Hebron

NC1108191896 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1900 GMT 11 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 11 Aug (MENA)—The Central Committee of the Fatah Movement, the biggest Palestinian faction, has unanimously rejected a proposal for a gradual Israeli withdrawal from Hebron. The committee said the proposal conflicts with the Palestinian-Israeli agreement on the second stage of negotiations.

MENA learned that Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat had presented the proposal to the Fatah Central Committee during its two-day meeting in Cairo.

Sources close to the meeting said members of the committee stressed that any concession will have a dire impact on the negotiations as it would constitute a serious precedent allowing Israel to retreat from its agreements with the Palestinian Authority.

Palestinian Affairs: FCC Rejects Proposal on Hebron, Urges 'Peaceful Struggle'

JN1108204896 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 2000 GMT 11 Aug 96

[Muna Salim report from Cairo]

[FBIS Translated Text] At the conclusion of its meetings in Cairo, the Fatah Central Committee [FCC] rejected an Israeli proposal to effect a partial withdrawal from Hebron. It also rejected Israel's policy of retreating from its commitments and agreements with the PLO.

Muhammad Ghunaym, an FCC member who opposes the Oslo agreement, told our radio that Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat presented the Israeli proposal to the FCC and that the FCC decided to reject it and insist on Israel's adherence to the signed agreement, including the Hebron withdrawal, which is now five months overdue.

Discussions of the FCC, which is meeting for the first time in a year outside the Palestinian areas in the presence of the anti-Oslo agreement members, centered on how to confront Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu's policy, especially his decision to expand settlements in the Palestinian territory and his repeated objection to any negotiations on the future of occupied Arab Jerusalem.

Several participants announced that the FCC decided to confront attempts to expand settlements and resist any changes on the ground through peaceful struggle.

Muhammad Ghunaym said that the peaceful struggle against settlement expansion means that no weapons will be used, but it does not rule out the use of Palestinian fists if the need arises.

No tangible measures were announced after the meeting, but the resumption of the FCC meetings in the presence of both supporters and objectors to the Oslo agreement reflects a unanimous desire to agree on a minimum measure to face Netanyahu's policies, as many participants say.

Palestinian Affairs: Quray' Interviewed on 'Historic' FCC Meeting in Cairo

JN1208101896 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0425 GMT 12 Aug 96

[Interview with Ahmad Quray', FCC member and speaker of the Palestinian Legislative Council, by Mahmud Abu-al-Hayja' on 12 August; place not given—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Abu-al-Hayja'] Brother Abu-'Ala' [Quray'], the Fatah Central Committee [FCC] meetings ended in Cairo yesterday. What can you tell us about these meetings?

[Quray'] First of all, I consider this meeting one of the most, if not the most, important Fatah meeting because of its timing, the current circumstances, and prevailing Palestinian conditions. The two-day Cairo meeting came after a lapse of considerable time and included all the FCC members, both inside and outside the Palestinian territory, with the exception of Brother Abu-al-Adib [Palestine National Council Speaker Salim al-Za'nun], who could not attend because of very unavoidable circumstances. He apologized for his absence due to circumstances that were impossible to overcome.

Topping the meeting's agenda were the political situation, conditions in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, the negotiations, the Arab situation, Palestinian-Arab relations, Palestinian- international relations, and the policy of the new Israeli Government — especially the threats of settlement activity and the continuous violations in Jerusalem and its surroundings.

Naturally, the meeting dealt with the internal conditions of the Fatah Movement, rectifying these conditions, holding elections in various areas to come up with new leaders and infuse new blood into Fatah to face the challenges of the coming phase. I believe that the meeting was really serious and important. I can say that it was a historic meeting in which the Fatah Movement proved that it is the Palestinian people's movement, that it represents the Palestinian people's struggle, and that its leadership is a responsible leadership that provides immense support for the Palestinian National Authority [PNA].

[Abu-al-Hayja'] Were any specific resolutions issued at the FCC meeting?

[Quray'] Undoubtedly, such a meeting is bound to make very important decisions. Politically, the FCC decided to support the PNA. It also asked the PLO to enhance moves on the Arab and international levels, in coordination with the sisterly Arab countries—Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, and the Arab Maghreb; with the two cosponsors of the peace conference; and with the EU and Japan. The FCC stressed the importance of convening the Arab League Council at the foreign ministers level to present problems such as the settlements and Jerusalem. They must shoulder their responsibilities.

The FCC members decided that the settlement issue is a policy that will destroy the political process and, therefore, must be confronted at the domestic, Arab, Islamic, and international levels. Otherwise, the negotiations will be meaningless. The peace process will be eroded if the Israeli Government's settlement campaign continues.

On the domestic situation, the FCC was briefed in detail on the movement's organizational conditions and decided to promote the elections in terms of areas and committees. It studied the situation in the PNA areas of the West Bank and Gaza and made a number of recommendations in this regard. It also decided that the Fatah organization will assume its historical responsibilities as a vanguard of our people, given that the Fatah Movement belongs to the Palestinian people. I believe that the results of this meeting will be seen soon, God willing.

[Abu-al-Hayja'] Brother Abu-'Ala', FCC member, thank you.

[Quray'] Thank you.

Palestinian Affairs: Central Committee Decides To Refer Settlement Issue to UN

JN1108201896 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1800 GMT 11 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Fatah Central Committee decided to take the issue of Israeli settlement in the Palestinian territories to the United Nations. This came in a statement issued by the Fatah Central Committee which concluded its meetings in Cairo today.

Fatah Central Committee member Faruq Qaddumi said the participants in the meeting decided to adopt tangible measures to effectively confront the policy of Israeli settlement in Palestine.

Fatah Central Committee member 'Abbas Zaki said the committee decided to call on the Arab League to meet at the foreign ministers' level to discuss the repressive Israeli measures against the Palestinian people. The committee also decided to call on the Jerusalem Committee to meet to discuss the settlement activities which aim to Judaize the holy city, he added.

Palestinian Affairs: PLO's Abbas on Fatah Meeting, Contacts With Israelis

NC1108171396 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1610 GMT 11 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 11 Aug (MENA)—PLO Executive Committee member Mahmud 'Abbas, Abu-Mazin, said that the meetings of the Fatah Movement's Central Committee discussed the political situation in general, Palestinian-Israeli relations, Palestinian action at the Arab level, the new situation in Israel, and the movement's internal situation.

In a statement he made prior to his departure from Cairo to Gaza today, Abu-Mazin said that all the pending issues with the Israeli side were discussed, particularly the remaining ones of the transitional stage, such as the Hebron issue, the Palestinian detainees, the secure corridor, and the displaced persons. The committee also discussed the resumption of negotiations on the final stage, which started on 5 May and which are devoted to a discussion of the settlements, he added.

He noted that the Fatah Movement's Central committee warned during its meeting of the dangers of the Israeli Government's current policy of expanding the settlements. He said: We have sent messages to Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu, the Arab leaders, and President Mubarak on this issue.

He added: We are always eager to coordinate with Egypt, which is playing a major role through its relations in the region and with Israel. Therefore, we come to explain the difficulties we face and Egypt helps the Palestinian side with the Israeli and other sides.

On the current contacts with the Israelis, Abu-Mazin said: There are no talks, but there are contacts through envoys or direct meetings with officials. We have asked Israel to name their members of the higher committee on the negotiations but they have not informed us of these names so far. We are ready to name our members, but they [the Israelis] are not respecting the dates. This is very serious as it could lead to the collapse of the structures of the agreements with the Israelis. He stressed that the Israeli side has so far not shown any willingness to negotiate.

Palestinian Affairs: Minister Discusses PLO-Cabinet Meeting, Israeli Stand

JN1008110496 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 0525 GMT 10 Aug 96

[Telephone interview with Palestinian Culture Minister Yasir 'Abd-Rabbuh in Gaza, by Za'al Abu-Rukbah in Jericho; from the "A New Day" feature—live]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Abu-Rukbah] We have been trying to get some information on yesterday's meeting of the PLO Executive Committee and the cabinet since early this morning. It seems that the final statement has not yet been issued. Can you shed any light on the meeting?

['Abd-Rabbuh] The meetings went on until 0100 [2200 GMT on 9 August] today. Several issues were discussed, most prominent among which is the settlement activity in all the Palestinian areas, including Jerusalem. Several decisions were made and measures taken to support and develop a campaign to combat this settlement activity at all the levels, national or domestic, and there is a need to confront this activity.

Extremely dangerous settlement schemes are being devised. It is clear that the Israeli Government is trying to pave the way for these schemes, and it seems that this government is doing nothing at the domestic level, or any other level for that matter, except appeasing, backing, and conniving with the settlers.

Therefore, we consider this matter to be a priority, and we discussed it in detail. We highly valued the role played by the people of Rafah to struggle against the attempts to steal the lands of Rafah and expand settlements in the Gaza Strip. We also voiced appreciation for the efforts of national forces and institutions in the Rafah area to confront this settlement activity.

With respect to Jerusalem, we discussed attempts to transfer the settlement activity to the very heart of Jerusalem, in addition to new areas such as al-'Ayzariyah and many other areas in the West Bank. We need to continue with this campaign to counter this activity with all our means.

[Abu-Rukbah] Did you discuss any special domestic issues?

['Abd-Rabbuh] Of course we discussed the report presented by the special ministerial committee, which was set up during the last meeting for Palestinian Authority Council of Ministers to discuss the developments that took place in Tulkarm and Nabulus and to find out what caused these incidents. This committee came up with certain recommendations and suggestions, which were discussed in depth proceeding from two principles. The first is defending the Palestinian national arena from any attempts at plotting and fragmentation. The second principle is defending the supremacy of the law and the institutions, rejecting any violation of the law and its authority, and asserting the need for all institutions and organs to abide by law.

[Abu-Rukbah] There have been reports of an expected meeting of the cordon states, as they were called in the past: Jordan, Palestine, Syria, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia.

['Abd-Rabbuh] There is actually an idea that the states directly concerned with the political process should meet. However, it is too early to say when and how. As we can see, contacts are continuing. There will be a meeting with President Mubarak today. There were meetings in Syrian and al-'Aqabah and before that with His Majesty King Fahd. Paving the way for such a meeting continues. What is important is not to hold such meetings but to continue the spirit of the Arab summit, stressing international legitimacy and the basis of the peace process, continuing the pressure to force Israel to respect agreements and the principles of the peace process, as well as coordinating with the international powers concerned, like the EU and others.

The Arab atmosphere is much better now than it was before. It seems that the Netanyahu government and Israel's Arab policy experts are portraying this positive Arab stand as a sign of retreat, of weakness, or a disintegration of the Arab front that confronts the Likud's policy of expansion and settlements, the policy of turning a cold shoulder to the peace process, as is clear from the Netanyahu's plans and programs.

[Abu-Rukba] Thank you, Culture Minister Yasir 'Abd-Rabbuh.

['Abd-Rabbuh] Thanks and good morning to you.

Palestinian Affairs: Al-Husayni Arrives in Cairo, Comments on Jerusalem

NC1008152496 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1445 GMT 10 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 10 Aug (MENA)—Faysal al-Husayni, official in charge of the Jerusalem file in the Palestinian National Authority [PA], arrived here this afternoon from Amman to attend the Fatah Central Committee meeting, which will begin this evening in Cairo.

Speaking upon arrival at Cairo Airport, al-Husayni said that members of the Fatah Central Committee will discuss the political changes in the region, the nature of the new Israeli Government in light of its attempts to deny Palestinian rights, internal Palestinian affairs, the Palestinians' international relations, and Fatah's organizational matters.

Regarding Jerusalem, al-Husayni said: We are working along two lines. The first relies on Resolution 242, which means an Israeli withdrawal from the territories it occupied in 1967. The second line rejects the establishment of another Berlin Wall dividing the City of Jerusalem and speaks of a solution that enables us to establish a capital for us in East Jerusalem and at the same time keeps the lines between the two parts of the city open.

Asked about the Palestinian-Israeli contacts in the future and whether he will meet with Dore Gold, Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu's adviser who is currently in Cairo, al-Husayni said: I do not believe the matter necessitates a meeting with Gold, who is in Cairo. It seems the Israelis are preoccupied now with their domestic problems, he added.

Regarding the Palestinian position on the Israeli proposals concerning talks with Lebanon, al-Husayni noted that Israel is always trying to separate things, but the matter is primarily up to the Lebanese. He stressed the Palestinians' determination to seek a comprehensive solution and not to divide the issues.

Reminded that the Palestinians accepted Gaza-Jericho First, al-Husayni said that they had accepted this principle as a kind of reorganization of the negotiations. He added: Through their presence in Gaza, Ramallah, and Nabulus the Palestinians are negotiating from Palestinian territories to liberate them. He added that there is a difference between Gaza-Jericho First and Lebanon First, although the two are similar in that the Israelis wish things to happen gradually. He added: We have to adopt a clear and unified Arab stance, particularly since we have entered the stage of the final and comprehensive solution.

Palestinian Affairs: Al-Husayni Says Israeli Policy in 'State of Confusion'

JN0908173296 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1500 GMT 9 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Faysal al-Husayni, the Palestinian Authority's official in charge of the Jerusalem file, said that the new Israeli decision [which links negotiations with the Palestinians to ending Palestinian political activity in Jerusalem] shows the confusion that has prevailed in Israeli policy since the right-wing assumed power in Israel. He noted that whoever closes Orient House closes the file on negotiations.

[Begin recording] [Al-Husayni] First of all, I believe that the Israelis cannot close Orient House. Orient House is not just an ordinary building and an ordinary office. It is a part of the political peace process. Whoever wants to close Orient House will have to close the whole negotiations file. Of course, closing Orient House means excluding Jerusalem from the negotiations, which in turn torpedoes the basis of these negotiations.

[Correspondent Widad 'Alam-al-Din] So, what is the purpose behind Netanyahu's statement today?

[Al-Husayni] Let me say that the Israeli government and Netanyahu have been in a state of confusion ever since they won the elections. It seems like they did everything they could to win during the election campaign, but they were not convinced they would succeed. Hence, they were not ready for their success. They were preparing themselves for the elections after these elections.

They were taken by surprise. They created a situation and built an alliance for themselves that is not at all in line with the political peace process. This made them confused.

Netanyahu says that he wants to close [Legislative Council member] Hatim 'Abd-al-Qadir's office, while the Israeli minister of internal security signed an agreement with Hatim 'Abd-al-Qadir to keep his office open and to cancel the orders to close it. They are confused. [end recording]

Palestinian Affairs: Quray' Says Israeli Violations Make Peace Process 'Meaningless'

JN0908134896 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1100 GMT 9 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Legislative Council Speaker Ahmad Quray', Abu-'Ala', said that the peace process will be meaningless if Israel insists on its decision to give the settlers a free hand and on violating the agreement on Jerusalem.

During a meeting with Austrian Ambassador Herbert Kroell yesterday, Abu-'Ala' added that the Legislative Council decided to study the possibility of suspending the negotiations with Israel until it commits itself to the signed agreements and stops settlement activity.

The Legislative Council speaker received an invitation to visit Austria in November to meet with the Austrian president, the prime minister, and the president of the Parliament.

Palestinian Affairs: Joint Letter on Hebron Observers' Mandate Reported

JN1108200096 Jericho Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1800 GMT 11 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] In the presence of Mrs. (Muna las), the Norwegian Government's representative to the Palestinian National Authority [PNA], the Palestinian and Israeli sides signed a joint letter today addressed to the Norwegian Government to ask Denmark, Sweden, Italy, Australia, and Turkey to extend the mandate of the international observers in Hebron by another month.

Dr. Sa'ib 'Urayqat, minister of local government signed the joint letter for the PNA, and Eytan Bentzur, acting director general of the Israeli Foreign Ministry, signed for the Israeli Government.

Arab-Israeli Talks

Arab-Israeli Talks: Israel, PA Agree To Extend Mandate of Observers in Hebron

TA1108144196 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1400 GMT 11 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Israel and the Palestinian Authority [PA] have agreed to extend the mandate of the Norwegian observers in Hebron by another month. Our political correspondent Shlomo Raz notes that if redeployment takes place soon, the character of the observers' operations will change, and they will be joined by more observers from several countries.

Algeria

Algeria: DFLP Leader Cited on Talks With President Zeroual

LD0908142196 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1130 GMT 9 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] President Zeroual met with Nayif Hawatimah, secretary-general of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine [DFLP], this morning. The meeting was attended by Foreign Minister Ahmed Attaf and by Abdelkader Taffar, adviser to the president for international relations and cooperation. After the meeting, Hawatimah made the following statement:

[Begin Hawatimah recording] The meeting with brother President Liamine Zeroual was a great and pleasant Palestinian Arab-Algerian meeting. [passage omitted]

Regarding the Palestinian issue, we presented to the brother president an initiative by the DFLP for the reconstruction of Palestinian unity — Palestinian national unity which was destroyed by the Oslo agreement. Our initiative, which was presented to the president and the brothers in the Algerian leadership, is to see Algeria play its great and noble national and pan-Arab role in bringing together all the main Palestinian forces within the PLO with a view to reconstructing the unity of Palestinian ranks. This is done in parallel with Algeria's current efforts to strengthen Arab national ranks in unity as it did during the recent Arab summit in Cairo; and to promote the summit's work for Arab unity in the common struggle against the enemies of the Arab nation, and for a comprehensive and balanced peace in the Middle East between the Palestinian people and the Hebrew state, and between the Arab states and the Hebrew state.

Peace should be based on implementation of UN resolutions 242 and 338 on land for peace, and lead to the exercising of the Palestinian right to put an end to occupation, remove the settlements from the Palestinian land occupied in June 1967, secure self-determination, and build an independent state with Jerusalem as its capital, as stressed by President Liamine Zeroual.

Peace should also lead to implementing the UN resolution on the right of refugees to return home, in accordance with Resolution 194, in return for a comprehensive and balanced peace between the Palestinian people and the Arab nation on the one hand, and the Hebrew state on the other hand. [end recording]

Algeria: Differences of Views in Zeroual's Talks With Hamas

LD1008133496 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1200 GMT 10 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The last meeting within the bilateral rounds of dialogue brought together today Liamine Zeroual, president of the republic, and a delegation from Hamas [Islamic Society Movement] led by Mahfoud Nahnah.

After the meeting, the Hamas leader, Mahfoud Nahnah, made the following statement to colleague Mohsen Slimani.

[Begin Nahnah recording] There were differences of views in diagnosing the crisis from which the Algerian people are suffering and seeking solutions to it. The matter is not related to the issue of committees as much as it concerns the need to expand the scope of liberties and define the true national identity which was agreed upon.

We have proposed the issue of the document of principles but no final solution was reached today. We will meet with our institutions in the next few hours so as to decide on the issue. We are part of the Algerian political class and we cannot leave the floor to those who are not from the political class. If we respect ourselves as a political class then we must hold a political and peaceful dialogue with anybody who wishes to do so, particularly since the sphere of democracy has started to expand in our country and it will have repercussions even on the Arab, African, and Mediterranean levels, God willing. [end recording].

The meeting was attended by Mohamed Betchine, minister adviser to the president of the republic, and Abdelmadjid Bouzidi, adviser in charge of economic affairs at the presidency of the republic.

Algeria: Zeroual, MDA's Bensmail Hold 'Frank' Dialogue

LD0908131696 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1130 GMT 9 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Completing his bilateral meetings in the current round of dialogue with the opposition, President Zeroual today had a meeting with a delegation of the Movement for Democracy in Algeria [MDA], led by Khaled Bensmail. After the meeting, the latter made the following statement:

[Begin Bensmail recording] The dialogue was frank both on our part and on that of the president. Differences still exist over essential topics on ways of extricating the country from this crisis. Differences were over ways of stopping the bloodshed and the amendment of the constitution. [end recording] [passage omitted]

Algeria: Bensmail Says MDA Will Not Participate in Commissions

LD0908155096 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in French 1130 GMT 9 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] This morning the president received a delegation of the MDA [Movement for Democracy in Algeria], led by [MDA Secretary General] Khaled Bensmail. As far as the MDA is concerned, the differences persist, and it will not be participating in any commission:

[Begin Bensmail recording] The differences exist: They remain as they were. There have been no major changes. We believe that the main crisis in Algeria is a political crisis that requires a political solution. In other words, we have to get to the bottom of problems which have stemmed from the bloodshed taking place today. Whether they are problems of a political, economic, or social nature, they are proliferating in the shadow of violence in the country.

We will not participate in the commissions on which we have been invited to sit by the presidency, because we believe that the commissions have been created for a specific reason, which is the revision of the constitution, revision of the law concerning parties, and revision of the electoral law. This does not get to the bottom of the problem. [end recording]

During these bilateral talks, which began last Saturday [3 August], President Liamine Zeroual received the RCD [Rally for Culture and Democracy], the UGTA [General Union of Algerian Workers], the FFS [Socialist Forces Front], Ennahda, the FLN [National Liberation Front], and Ettahadi [Progress, Modernity, Democracy]. Apart from the FFS, all of the participants in the bilateral talks have agreed with several proposals in President Zeroual's memorandum, notably those concerning the revision of the constitution, which opens the way to the establishment of four commissions which will be given the task of drawing up bills concerning the electoral law, the law on parties, revision of the constitution, and preparations for the conference of national accord.

Algeria: Paper Interviews Opposition Leader Djaballah

LD0908173296 Algiers AL-HURRIYAH in Arabic 22-28 Jul 96 pp 7, 8

[Interview with Abdallah Djaballah by correspondents Mohamed Alouache and Mohamed Laakab; place and date not given]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Djaballah] The opposition should not fail again — it has been proven in Algeria that the regime does not like to deal with the opposition as a bloc, it would rather deal with parties as [individual] parties. However, regarding the issue of the coalition of parties we, in the Islamic Renewal [Al-Nahdah] Movement [IRM], have discussed what should have been done immediately after the presidential elections. We suggested then to the sides the need to present another political initiative to regain control of the initiative in the national arena. However, this was not easy for reasons many colleagues may describe as objective.

[AL HURRIYAH] You have returned to the multilateral dialogue with the regime. What was your stance this time and what were the IRM's most significant proposals? What is your opinion about the "family" under which you have been categorized?

[Djaballah] We were not concerned about the issue of the parties with which we were siding, nor with the issue of the divisions created by the regime, because our issue is not with the parties but with the regime. This is not about a personal or partisan affair; it is about the general affair of the homeland, individual and collective public rights and liberties, a balanced organization of the regime to accommodate the safeguarding of security and stability, the protection of public interest, and individual and collective rights and liberties. That was why we did not discuss the issue of the groups which were set up.

Concerning the part about the most significant and important issue we proposed at the meeting, we could talk about this at length but it may be not be a good idea to deal with it in detail in this interview.

Briefly, I would say that at first we proposed the issue of the agenda and it was agreed to enter the ending of the bloodshed as the first item for discussion. The movement's views about the nature of the crisis and the causes that led the country onto the slippery slopes were also discussed. We moved on to talk intensively and with a legal slant about constitutional amendments and the other issues on the agenda. Perhaps the most important ideas [discussed] were the following:

— Opening up the political and media fields and ending monitoring the activities in theses fields;

— rejecting constitutional amendments prior to legislative elections;
— making Islam, Arabism, and Amazigh [Berber language] the points of reference for the regime and the opposition;
— maintaining reservations about amending the law on political associations and calling for the nonapplication of retroactive effects if the principle of amendment is approved;
— adopting the system of proportional representation balloting on a national basis and providing full political, media, legal, and security safeguards to ensure free, pluralistic, and honest elections in which intimidation and monopoly are excluded in addition to ensuring that the results will be respected;
— maintaining reservations about the participation of civil association in the national accord conference, while benefiting from their views in various consultations;
— reaching agreement on the document of general principles, the point of reference for which should be the 1 November Declaration and national tenets; and
— adding the issue of stopping the bloodshed and the various safeguards required for a free and honest electoral process to the agenda of the conference.

Agreement was reached on many of these issues. However, differences remain on some, particularly those concerning constitutional amendments, stopping the bloodshed, and the question of nonapplication of the retroactive effect. [passage omitted]

[AL HURRIYAH] It seems that the issue of the dissolved FIS [Islamic Salvation Front] keeps coming up. You submitted it for discussion at the last meeting but the regime believes that the file has been finally closed.

[Djaballah] The issue was raised at the meeting. Every side stuck to its views. During our meeting with President Zeroual, we stressed that when we talked about the crisis we wanted to deal with it from the various security, social, media, political and economic aspects. That is why we have been persistently calling for the lifting of the state of emergency. We believe that a lot of the pressure that has been put on political parties and the media is due to the state of emergency law. We further believe that the lifting of the state of emergency will contribute toward easing the tension and raising everyone's hope of the possibility of overcoming the existing ordeal.

[AL HURRIYAH] You talked about the need for compromise by everyone. However, it is obvious that compromises have always come from the parties while the regime has so far been holding on to all the plans it had drawn up at the beginning.

[Djaballah] This observation is significant, however much we take previous experiences into consideration. As for the future and on the basis of our 17 July meeting, it would be premature to confirm or deny that significance. When we raised issues of that kind at the last meeting, we obtained promises from the president, such as a promise to commit the regime and the opposition to defending Islam, a promise not to meddle with Chapter One of the Constitution, a promise to open the political and media fields to everyone, and a promise to lift the state of emergency at the earliest possible date.

These are good promises and we have no right to prejudge them now. We should leave that [judgment] for the next few weeks and wait for the work of the committees, which is due to begin on 25 July.

[AL HURRIYAH] You are focusing greatly on the nonretroactive application of amendments to the law on political parties. Is this out of fear regarding the abolition of Islamic parties, or what?

[Djaballah] We have absolutely no fears regarding that and I have stressed this to the president. As a party, we have no problem with the proposed amendments, particularly regarding the number [of signatures] required to be collected in the provinces. I have suggested that they should be raised to 1,000 or 1,500 and not in 35 provinces but in 40.

The problem is not our party's. The problem is about who has the right to judge or make judgments about the parties. Is it the administration or the people? [passage omitted]

[AL HURRIYAH] You do not object to constitutional amendments as much as you object to the timing proposed by the regime. Meanwhile, you have refused to participate in the committee which has been set up for that purpose.

[Djaballah] We have agreed to participate in three committees because we have not discussed these issues [which the committee are due to deal with] in detail and, therefore, the differences between us and the regime have not been clearly defined. We have deferred our decision regarding the constitutional amendments committee because there are fundamental differences between us and the regime regarding that [issue]. We have decided on another meeting to discuss this issue, after which our final stance vis-a-vis that committee will be determined. [passage omitted]

[AL HURRIYAH] Let us conclude. The United States knew that Europe and the industrialized world were against them. They knew about the Russian stance.

It was obvious that the plan would fail. Nevertheless, Clinton agreed to sign the bill. Why?

[Djaballah] This is not the first time that the current U.S. government has acted without judgment or proper evaluation. You might remember when they wanted to discourage the Russians from helping us with the Bushehr nuclear reactor. The U.S. President started by saying in his propaganda that he would go to Russia and persuade the Russians. But he went to Russia and failed to convince them. This showed immaturity in policymaking and propaganda. How could they manage to speak with such confidence without proper prior assessment, to address world public opinion, to speak of victory, to give hope to friends, to warn the enemy, but then go to Moscow and fail after four hours of talks with President Yeltsin on the need to end their nuclear cooperation with Iran? And then, they announced very openly that they had failed. How could they manage to speak of victory and to extend people's expectations but then go [to Moscow] and fail? The negative consequences of such defeats are great. They had advertised to the contrary without caution or politeness. The same thing is happening again. They tried hard, in Sharm al-Shaykh, in Lyons, in Paris, in Italy, and other places. They tried to impose their views about Iran on Europe, Japan, Canada, and others. They failed. This time they started a propaganda racket a few days before the signing of the bill by Clinton, maybe because they wanted to frighten the competition and push forward their own plans in the climate that they had created. But events proved that they had failed in their calculations once again.

[AL HURRIYAH] Why have you called for constitutional amendments to be deferred until after the legislative elections? Is it out of fear that the regime might rig the popular referendum, or what?

[Djaballah] I am among those who believe that there is a need for the 1989 Constitution to be revised, particularly the chapters concerning the authorities and the legislative institutions. However, I also believe in the need to respect the existing constitution and the laws of the land. [passage omitted]

Our commitment to the deferment of constitutional amendments is based on the need to respect the constitution and laws because this, in our opinion, will consolidate the standing of the regime among the people and will provide impetus to all the state institutions to respect the constitution and laws. [passage omitted]

[AL-HURRIYAH] It seems that the regime has succeeded in one thing it has been endeavoring to achieve from the start, particularly since the Rome contract, namely to deal with the parties separately and not as groups or blocs. We can see the result now in the inability of the parties to achieve any degree of coordination among themselves, and the failure of the meetings of the eight parties is proof of that.

[Djaballah] Actually, this analysis is far from the truth. No-one can deny that the regime in any country has the primary and principal role in bringing about various changes, because it is the decision-maker which has the capability of making an opinion into a decision and a decision into a deed.

As for those without authority, they possess nothing but views and advice. Indeed, it has become evident in Algeria that the regime does not like to deal with the opposition as a bloc, and that it prefers to deal with the parties separately.

However, I do not believe that your remark on the issue of the coalition of parties is valid. We had discussed at length what should have been done immediately after the presidential elections. At the time, we proposed to the parties that there was a need to put forward another political initiative in order to regain control over the initiative in the national arena. However, this was not possible for reasons that many political colleagues may perceive as objective. [passage omitted]

[AL HURRIYAH] The regime is now saying that its only point of reference is the 16 November 1995 elections. You will be attending the national conference. Do you not believe that the conference may be another ruse similar to the January 1994 conference?

[Djaballah] Indeed, the regime considers the 16 November elections as its point of reference. It has its own interpretation of the elections, which it regards as a means of promoting and drawing up its policy on dealing with the crisis. This differs from our interpretation of the elections. We regarded them as a popular demand for serious action to restore peace; achieve conciliation; and end the bloodshed, tears, and chaos. We believe the atmosphere that prevailed afterwards provided an opportunity for the regime and opposition to work in earnest to realize the hope expressed by the people during the elections.

Regarding the conference of national accord, we do not believe that it will be like the 1994 conference. We have opposed anyone who wanted to make it into another conference of national accord. We have said that that kind of proposal would constitute an obstacle to the success of the forthcoming conference, and that we must disregard it. [passage omitted]

[AL HURRIYAH] Will you have a political or technical discussion at your next meeting with the presidency?

[Djaballah] At my previous meeting, I discussed the issue of constitutional amendments mainly from a legal point of view. I believe that the discussion at the next meeting will focus, first, on the legal aspect and, second, on the political aspect.

Algeria: Zeroual Concludes Bilateral Meetings With Parties

LD1008181896 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 10 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] President of the Republic Liamine Zeroual today concluded the series of bilateral meetings, which started on 3 August, with officials of the political parties — the Rally for Culture and Democracy, the Socialist Forces Front, Ennahda Movement, Ettahadi Movement, Movement for Democracy in Algeria, the Islamic Society Movement, and the general secretary of the General Union of Algerian Workers.

The initiative to hold those recent bilateral meetings was made with the aim of deepening dialogue and discussing the various views expressed during the multilateral meetings.

Within this context, the presidency announced today that the mixed committees agreed upon in principle during those various meetings by the majority of participants in the dialogue will start their work shortly.

Algeria: Four Opposition Parties Agree To Take Part in Conference

LD1108182396 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 1700 GMT 11 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The joint committees, set up to examine a number of political issues, such as the national conference, are due to start their proceedings very shortly. These committees, which were announced by the Presidency of the Republic yesterday, are regarded as a step forward in the process of national dialogue, after the bilateral meetings which ended yesterday. [passage omitted]

Most of the political parties invited to this round of bilateral meetings have agreed to join the initiative made by the president and included in the memorandum. Thus, four parties have accepted to take part in the joint committees, and will therefore participate in the national conference. These parties are the Rally for Culture and Democracy, the National Liberation Front, the Islamic Society Movement, Hamas, and Ennahda movement, in addition to the General Union of Algerian Workers.

Algeria: New Republican Party Leader Endorses President's Policy

LD0908131196 Algiers Radio Algiers Network in Arabic 2200 GMT 8 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Following his election by members of the Republican Party's national congress, the party's new leader, Slimane Cherif, said that his party endorses the content and form of the national dialogue called for by President Liamine Zeroual. He said that the president's effort conforms with the Republican Party's political line and that dialogue is the only way to get the country out of the crisis.

Algeria: Bomb Attack Causes Train Transporting Fuel Oil To Derail

LD1108113196 Paris Radio France International in French 1000 GMT 11 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] There has been another bomb attack in Algeria. The explosion of a homemade bomb on a railway line in Kabylie caused a train transporting fuel oils to derail Friday night. The incident was reported this morning by the Algerian daily newspaper EL MOUDJAHID.

The train and railway line were severely damaged but there were no victims, stated the newspaper.

Algeria: Article Discusses Transitional Stage of Islamists

LD1108111996 Algiers AL-HURRIYAH in Arabic 22 Jul 96 p 11

[Article by Benhocine: "The Islamists and the Pains of the Transitional Stage — What Place on the New Map?"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Is it possible to talk today about the Islamists' file in Algeria given the same facts of the eighties, while the political arena is undergoing profound upheavals from which the Islamists came out defeated. [sentence as published] As the biggest loser, after wasting political and social and even cultural stock, devoured by the fires of the crisis throughout a decade, they can do nothing but save what can be saved while waiting for a "relaunch."

The imbalance of power for the regime, will, apparently, at least during this transitional stage, make the consolidation of the principle of "Islam is the state's religion" a gain in itself so as not to become hostage to the interactions of the balance of negotiations between the political powers or as one of the variables of the fight for power as happened in many Arab countries — the nearest of which are our neighbors in the east.

Regress in the Negotiation Position

Indeed Ghazali's meeting in the summer of 1991, and even the national reconciliation meeting of January 1994, is incomparable with the facts of the upcoming national meeting, expected in September, with relation to the "weight" of the Islamists' file, especially after the realization by the parties participating in the multiparty dialogue round that the presidency considers the Islamic Salvation Front [FIS] file "a closed file" and hence outside the circle of negotiations.

More than this, the field of negotiating movement was restricted even for HAMAS [Islamic Society Movement] which, although being the second political power after the presidency according to the results of 25 percent achieved by its leader Nahnah in the recent presidential election, has a negotiation strategy that seems satisfied with just defending political gains and even the legitimacy of its political existence, by opposing attempts of amending the Constitution and the law of political parties.

However, Hamas and Ennahda movements have paid a high price following the FIS's defeat despite their varying opposition to this party. While it was expected that Cheikh Mahfoud Nahnah attracts the base of FIS, which is absent from the political arena, the defeat was so strong that it shook all positions of the Islamists without exception despite the enormous power of the Hamas leader to adapt to the political arena's changes and his success in avoiding a collision with the regime, including not resorting to the "empty chair" policy. Hamas did not waste the chance of being present in all the available political and societal institutions and bodies from the National Transitional Council to the ministries and the Higher Youth Council.

Through the strategy of being present in all places, Cheikh Mahfoud Nahnah was in fact preparing future calculations aimed at consolidating his political legitimacy and avoiding receiving the stroke of the scissors of constitutional amendment and the abolition of the political parties with a "religious" or "regional" trait to make his presence in the regime's branches an irrevocable fait accompli. It is probable that for this purpose in particular the Hamas leader insists on starting with organizing legislative elections before engaging in any constitutional amendment that is "the jurisdiction of an elected legislative body before being restricted to the president of the republic."

However, the Hamas movement has paid and is still paying the price of the fragmentation of the ranks of the Islamists at the political level and regarding the call for their cause. Division also affected the armed action to the point of confrontation and fighting between factions. Perhaps it is difficult today for Mahfoud Nahnah to speak from an independent position about the current balance of power between the authority and the Islamists without exception. This is indicated by the fact that, when it was at the peak of its struggle with the FIS, on both the political and security levels, the authority was always seeking to exploit the participation of Hamas in the support for the language and action of the presidency, as a moderate alternative for the Islamic movement. Relations between the two seems to be moving toward a change, now that the authority has closed the FIS file, and gained international and domestic support.

Backed by the legitimacy conferred on it by the 16 November 1995 elections, the presidency has not hesitated in adopting a new negotiating strategy that made Mahfoud Nahnah feel that the authority does not need him now, and that his political existence is liable to be altered by the requirements of the new political map. It seems that the Islamists, after a terrible regression at the political and social levels, are now in a position that forces them to stick to what they had gained so far — pending a fresh revival on more realistic bases. However, the priority in calculations made by parties like Hamas and Ennahda is now to find a more efficient negotiating style to avoid the guillotine of constitutional power. The time to talk about a unified Islamic pole is still far off, and such an event at best might be postponed until the rearrangement of the new political map, amid new challenges that need a new list of priorities, not necessarily political ones.

No doubt that, after the current stage, the Islamic scene will be witnessing a fresh revival that will reflect the effects of the current situation. Perhaps it is from these premises that the authority is seeking to influence this process with as much guidance as possible with a view to taming the Islamic movement. Meanwhile, the Islamists seem to be forced to review their calculations in accordance with the new stage, if they were to avoid being obliterated as an effective power in society.

Egypt

Egypt: Mubarak, 'Arafat Hold Talks

NC1008101596 Cairo MENA in Arabic
1005 GMT 10 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 10 Aug (MENA)—President Husni Mubarak held a session of talks with Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat this afternoon. The talks were attended on the Egyptian side by Prime Minister Dr. Kamal al-Janzuri, Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa, and Dr. Usamah al-Baz, Foreign Ministry first undersecretary and director of the President's Office for

Political Affairs. Attending on the Palestinian side were Mahmud 'Abbas, alias Abu- Mazin, secretary of the PLO Executive Committee; Faruq Qaddumi, head of the PLO Political Department; Ahmad Quray', speaker of the Palestine Legislative Council; Dr. Nabil Sha'th, minister of planning and international cooperation; and Zuhdi al-Qidrah, the Palestinian ambassador in Cairo.

Egypt: Musa Views Mubarak-'Arafat Talks, Israeli Measures

NC1008133496 Cairo MENA in Arabic
1215 GMT 10 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 10 Aug (MENA)—Egyptian Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa, speaking after President Mubarak's talks with Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat, said that the two leaders had discussed the current developments on the Palestinian-Israeli track, the obstacles raised, and Israel's failure thus far to implement the agreements it concluded with the Palestinians.

Musa added that during the talks it had been agreed to continue the consultations and coordination and to make some contacts that could secure a positive move on the Palestinian track. Musa noted that it had been clear during the talks that there is extreme dismay on the question of settlements as well as the situation in Jerusalem, although it is also clear that the Palestinian side, backed by the Egyptian side, is determined to continue the negotiations. Musa once again reiterated the importance of implementing the agreements, continuing the compliance with the Oslo agreement, and halting any measures and avoiding any further measures that may impede progress on the Palestinian-Israeli track.

Asked about the Israeli Cabinet's recent decision to expand the settlements and Egypt's position in this regard, Musa said: Our position is clear, and it is not just an Egyptian or Palestinian stance but an Arab and international stance; namely, that the settlement policy is dangerous to peace and stability in the Middle East. Musa emphasized that reverting to this policy will severely affect the peace process.

Regarding Israel's conditions that the Palestinian offices in Jerusalem must be closed for negotiations to resume with the Palestinians and how this can be handled, Musa said that this can be handled in the same way the other issues impeding the peace process are being handled, be they the measures in Jerusalem, the settlement issue, or other issues. These matters, he added, cannot be approved of or dealt with positively.

Asked if Israel's conditions regarding the Palestinian offices in Jerusalem as well as the settlement issue had been raised with Dore Gold, the Israeli prime minister's political adviser, during his recent visit to Cairo, Musa said: Contacts are under way regarding all these issues, but I cannot give any specific results so far in this regard.

Answering a question on whether the Arab reconciliation is proceeding on the right track according to the Egyptian views, Musa said it has indeed taken steps on the right track.

Asked about reports that Israel had asked for Egypt's support for its Lebanon First proposal, Musa said: This is wrong, wrong. He added that Egypt's position in this regard is very clear. If this initiative means a full withdrawal and full implementation of Security Council Resolution 425, Egypt is not against it. But if the withdrawal is tied to preconditions obstructing the implementation of Security Council Resolution 425 or if it leads to tactical stances that may impede or spoil the other tracks, particularly the Syrian track, I do not believe it can be successful, he added. Musa stressed once again that Egypt is not against any endeavor leading to a full withdrawal from any Arab territory.

Egypt: 'Arafat, Musa Discuss Developments in Peace Process

NC1108132196 Cairo MENA in Arabic
1300 GMT 11 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 11 Aug (MENA)—Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat conferred today with Egyptian Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa at 'Arafat's residence in Cairo. The meeting is part of the constant coordination and consultations between the Egyptian and Palestinian sides.

During the meeting, the two discussed the developments in the peace process, particularly along the Israeli-Palestinian track. President 'Arafat and Musa also discussed the future of the peace process in light of the recent Israeli measures and stances, particularly the Israeli Government's decision to revoke the freeze on the Israeli settlement expansion.

Egypt has warned of the dangers of the recent Israeli decision and its expected repercussions on peace and stability in the region, since the settlements represent an obstacle to peace.

Egypt: 'Arafat Leaves for Gaza After Two-Day Visit

NC1108135896 Cairo MENA in Arabic
1340 GMT 11 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 11 Aug (MENA)—Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat has praised President

Husni Mubarak's role in giving impetus to and safeguarding the peace process at the stage the Arab nation is now passing through.

Speaking before leaving Cairo for Gaza today, 'Arafat described his meeting with President Mubarak as necessary and important, adding that he briefed President Mubarak on the problems facing the peace process as well as the recent developments in Israel. He added that his meeting with President Mubarak will be of special importance and will help us proceed on the Palestinian and other Arab tracks.

Concluding his statement, 'Arafat expressed his and the Palestinian people's thanks to the Egyptian president, Government, and people for their principled and honorable stances alongside their Palestinian brothers.

President 'Arafat arrived in Cairo yesterday on a two-day visit, during which he met with President Mubarak and Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa.

Egypt: Mubarak Cited on Saudi Visit, Peace, Terrorism

NC0908203296 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1930 GMT 9 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 9 Aug (MENA)—President Husni Mubarak said that Egypt and Saudi Arabia believe in the need to coordinate the Arab stands against the present challenges and that both countries have reiterated their commitment to the Arab peace within the agreed terms of reference as approved by the expanded Arab summit held in Cairo in June.

In statements to the Egyptian press chief editors while en route back home from Jeddah yesterday, he added that he had discussed with custodian of the two holy mosques, King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al'Aziz, the outcome of his visit to the United States and his talks with President Bill Clinton, U.S. Administration officials, and U.S. Congressional leaders.

In statements to be published by the Egyptian papers tomorrow, Saturday, President Mubarak described his visit to Saudi Arabia as very good and said that King Fahd praised the Arab summit's communique as the first Arab communique that unreservedly underlines the peace strategy in the Middle East.

He said that his talks with King Fahd dealt with the importance of the just and comprehensive peace in the region as well as the importance of establishing peace between Israel and Syria and Lebanon and of implementing the agreements concluded on the Palestinian track. He added that Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and Syria are continuing their cooperation in service of Arab issues. He also said that his number one foreign policy issue is the establishment of peace in the Middle East. He stressed that the Egyptian-Saudi summit confirmed the two countries' identical views on various Arab and regional issues.

King Fahd and senior Saudi officials praised Mubarak's historic role in serving the Arab nation's interests at the regional and international levels and stressed that they bless President Mubarak's steps in full.

President Mubarak touched on information minister Safwat al-Sharif's recent mission to Libya and the latter's meeting with Libyan Revolution Leader Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi. He noted al-Qadhdhafi's appreciation of Egypt's efforts to bring the views closer and help achieve a fair solution to the Lockerbie crisis.

On Sudan, President Mubarak said that Egypt will not present a draft resolution to the Security Council on Sudan, but Khartoum must abandon its support for terrorism. He stressed that Egypt is against having peoples strangled within the framework of confronting terrorism and that Egypt will enforce the Security Council's resolutions against Sudan if the latter does not meet its obligations.

Regarding the latest peace developments, President Mubarak announced that Syria opposes the Israeli idea of concluding an agreement with Lebanon as a first step by which Israeli troops can be withdrawn from the occupied south in return for guaranteeing security for northern Israel.

He said that Syria's position is that the Syrian and Lebanese negotiating tracks are one single track, that progress on them must be parallel, and there must be no separation or piecemeal agreements.

President Mubarak remarked that his talks with President Yasir 'Arafat in Cairo tomorrow, Saturday, come in the context of their ongoing communications to promote the peace operation.

President Mubarak said that his communications with Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu are also continuing; the most recent instance of that was a telephone call two days ago in which Netanyahu asserted his commitment to implement the signed agreements.

He pointed out that Netanyahu had informed him of the measures he has adopted to ease the closure of the West Bank and Gaza.

Mubarak also said that King Husayn of Jordan told him that his meeting with Netanyahu in Amman a few days ago was a fruitful one.

President Mubarak explained that Egypt is making preparations for the international economic conference that will be held in Cairo in November, noting that the conference is an opportunity for the world to learn of Egypt's current economic progress.

However, Mubarak remarked: We are afraid that if the peace process is complicated, this will have repercussions on the economic conference, because its success is linked with progress at the peace talks.

He added that to ensure the success of the international economic conference, it is necessary to have progress on all negotiating tracks. He said that the economic conference might fail if there is not a favorable climate to discuss the important economic issues that are supposed to be raised.

President Mubarak described the partnership with Europe as proceeding as planned and noted that he travels to European countries whenever the need arises to help boost the Arab-European partnership.

On his forthcoming visit to Russia, President Mubarak said that preparations for it are proceeding in the right direction and that he has asked Foreign Minister 'Amr Musa to follow up on the invitation received from President Boris Yeltsin some time ago to visit Moscow, adding that he had accepted the invitation within the framework of Egypt's desire to strengthen its relations with all countries, especially the influential powers in today's world, which includes peace process cosponsor Russia.

On the minor terrorist operations that take place in Egypt from time to time, President Mubarak said that these are no more than criminal acts by a handful of criminals. He added: We are uprooting terrorism constantly, and the security forces are sparing no effort in confronting it.

On domestic issues, President Mubarak said that the issue of Egypt's economic development and raising the people's standard of living are always in his mind and he gives them the utmost attention. He added that his number one domestic policy issue is the achievement of social peace. He said: We are giving a strong push to investment projects. The way is open before the private sector to operate and act and even to invest in setting up power generating plants.

The president went on to say that maintaining social stability and sparing the citizens any new burdens were the reasons behind the delay in reaching agreement with the IMF.

He noted that increasing population is the most dangerous domestic issue facing us even though figures indicate a drop in the rate of increase. He stressed that he is endeavoring to provide the necessities of life for the Egyptian people and to reduce their burdens, adding that this is why Egypt has unique relations with all countries, from the north and south, East and West.

Egypt: PLO's Qaddumi on Fatah Central Committee Meetings, Hamas

NC1108195596 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1905 GMT 11 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 11 Aug (MENA)—Faruq Qaddumi, PLO Political Department Chief and Fatah Central Committee member, has said that the Fatah Central Committee discussed in detail during its meetings in Cairo the Israeli settlement activity and the subject of Jerusalem.

In press statements at the end of the committee meetings, Qaddumi said a number of measures were taken to confront the Israeli decisions, which undermine the peace process and disdain world public opinion. The measures, he said, will be put into practice and the settlement activity will be confronted by all legitimate methods recognized by international law.

Asked if these measures include the re-launching of the Palestinian intifadah, Qaddumi said the intifadah does not need a decision.

He said Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu turned his back on the peace process. We are holding contacts with the Arab leaders, our European friends, and the United States so that the necessary measures can be taken, he said.

Qaddumi denied that a meeting between Israeli Government adviser Dore Gold and Fatah members in Cairo took place during the former's visit to Egypt two days ago. "No meeting took place, and if it did, I was not informed of it," he said.

Qaddumi said he rejects any coordination between Israeli and Palestinian security agencies against Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement]. Hamas is a national movement and we are engaged in dialogue with it, he said.

He added: Differences in viewpoints are necessary because we are exercising democracy. Hamas is part of the national movement, the dialogue is continuing, and I am in touch with all political forces inside and outside [the West Bank and Gaza].

On Israel's demand that the Orient House in Jerusalem be closed as a condition for the resumption of the final-status negotiations with the Palestinian Authority, Qaddumi said: Israel is not entitled to raise this issue in the first place because there are no Palestinian activities in Jerusalem.

Egypt: PLO's Fatah Central Committee Meets in Cairo

NC1008175396 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1715 GMT 9 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Cairo, 10 Aug (MENA)—The Central Committee of Fatah, the largest PLO faction, began a meeting in Cairo under the chairmanship of Yasir 'Arafat this evening.

Sources in 'Arafat's delegation said that the meeting is being held in Cairo to allow some members who do not reside in the territories under the Palestinian National Authority's [PA] control to attend.

They added that the meeting will review the Arab-Israeli peace process, the status of the Palestinian-Israeli negotiations, and the obstacles facing them after the coming to power of a rightist Israeli Government under Binyamin Netanyahu. They will also discuss the delay in the redeployment of Israeli troops in Hebron.

The conferees will discuss the delay in beginning the third phase of negotiations, which should have started in June.

It should be noted that the third and final phase of talks is scheduled to tackle vital questions such as Jerusalem, the status of Israeli settlements in the territories under PA Control, the borders issue, and the fate of the Palestinian refugees and prospects for their return in line with UN resolution 194. The Fatah Central Committee has 22 members.

Libya

Libya: PRC Leader Backs Lifting of Sanctions 'As Soon As Possible'

LD0908130796 Tripoli Voice of Greater Arab Homeland in Arabic 1130 GMT 9 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] The brother leader of the revolution [Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi] has received a message from the Chinese President Jiang Zemin in reply to a message sent by the brother leader to world leaders and presidents and to the president of the UN Security Council regarding the unjust measures imposed on the Great Jamahiriyah [Libya].

The Chinese president's message to the brother leader said: We are following these measures with great concern and express our solidarity with the Jamahiriyah. China has always called for relations among states to be dealt with in accordance with international law and conventions and through direct dialogue.

The Chinese president said that essentially his country did not accept the unjust measures against Libya, not to mention the maintaining of those measures. He said that China appreciated and endorsed the efforts made by the Arab League, the Organization of African Unity, the Non-Aligned Movement, and other international and regional organizations to find a solution to the so-called Lockerbie issue.

In his message to the brother leader, the Chinese president expressed his hope that the parties concerned would respond to the call made recently by the Arab League and the Organization of African Unity on this matter in order to find a solution to the issue and have the measures against the Jamahiriyah lifted as soon as possible.

The Chinese president's message said that his country supported Libya's legitimate right to safeguard its national sovereignty and honor. [passage omitted: al-Qadhdhafi has received a similar message from the Greek president]

Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia: King Fahd, Jordan's King Husayn Discuss Ties, Peace

JN1208060296 Amman Radio Jordan in English 0400 GMT 12 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] His majesty the king [Husayn of Jordan], now in Saudi Arabia, and Saudi King Fahd have co-chaired a session held at the Royal Saudi Court in Jeddah, attended by a number of senior officials from both sides. During the meeting last night, discussions dealt with bilateral relations in various fields and means to develop them and current Arab issues. The two sides asserted the importance of bilateral consultation on issues of mutual concern and the vitalization of the bilateral agreements and the work of joint committees.

Their majesties asserted the need to heal inter-Arab rifts and to enhance Arab cohesion according to the resolutions of the latest Arab summit in Cairo for the benefit of future Arab generations. The two sides also discussed the Middle East peace process. They called on all sides concerned to resume peace talks and urged them to abide by all that have been achieved and agreed upon so far. They also urged all sides involved in the process to build on peace to achieve a just and comprehensive settlement, which all the people of the region are looking to gain.

The session was attended by His Royal Highness Prince 'Abdallah Bin-al-Husayn, Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti, the speakers of both houses of parliament, as well as other senior officials. The discussions were also attended by Saudi Crown Prince 'Abdallah Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, Defense Minister Sultan Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, and other Saudi senior officials.

On the other hand, Saudi King Fahd hosted a dinner banquet at the Saudi Royal Court in Jeddah in honor of his majesty the king and the accompanying delegation.

Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti, accompanying his majesty on his visit to Saudi Arabia, has held talks with Saudi Interior Minister Prince Nayif Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz. Their talks covered bilateral relations, especially in the fields of facilitating the movement of citizens and goods between the two countries, as well as issuing visas and opening the Saudi market for the Jordanian manpower force.

Earlier, Mr. al-Kabariti voiced appreciation for the Jordanian-Saudi relations. He told the SAUDI NEWS AGENCY that bilateral relations in all fields are developing for the benefit of the two countries. Premier al-Kabariti said Jordan is concerned in strengthening political, economic, social, and security ties with the Saudi Kingdom.

Kuwait

Kuwait: Official Says Kuwait Ready To Deter Any Iraqi Provocation

LD1008110996 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic 0642 GMT 10 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Kuwait, 10 Aug (KUNA) — In a statement published here today, a prominent Kuwaiti military official stresses that the Iraqi regime is well aware that any provocation against Kuwait will be met with harsh deterrence.

In a statement to the Kuwaiti daily newspaper 'AL-ANBA,' Lieutenant General 'Ali al-Mu'min, chief of the Army general staff, said that the agreements and pacts signed by Kuwait with brotherly and friendly states aim at preventing a repetition of the 2 August 1990 events.

He said: "Holding joint military maneuvers and exercises is proceeding in accordance with a well prepared and thorough plan, and the aim is to improve Kuwaiti soldiers' combat standards." [passage omitted]

He stressed "the eagerness of the military command to select the weapons that are suitable and appropriate for the army's capabilities." He pointed out: "The countries which export weapons to Kuwait are committed to take into consideration the development of the weapons and the offering of expertise to Kuwaiti soldiers." [passage omitted]

Mu'min specified the most modern weapons brought into service recently as: "U.S. Abrams MAE-2, Desert Warrior, and the Russian BMB-3 tanks, Russian missile launchers, Patriot air defense systems — which will be brought into service soon — and a command and control system."

Mu'min revealed that the Staff College will receive government accreditation and the first batch of Kuwaiti officers will graduate soon.

He said: "The training of pilots will take place in Kuwait rather than a foreign country. Training aircraft have been moved from Britain to Kuwait, and flying and training facilities will be opened locally soon. Trainers from Kuwait and allied countries will be asked to assist with the training."

The chief of the general staff pointed out: "There are intensive plans to attract Kuwaiti citizens to the military sector. These plans include improving the standard of living for the families, taking care of retired personnel, bolstering the educational aspect of those attached to the military corps, and expanding the spheres of university education."

Iraq: INA Reports Sanctions Committee's Approval of Oil Sales

JN0908101096 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0925 GMT 9 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] New York, 9 Aug (INA) — On Thursday the Sanctions Committee adopted Iraq's export and import procedures, as well as the mechanism to implement the formula of oil for food, medicine, and basic needs of the Iraqi people in accordance with the memorandum of understanding signed by Iraq and the UN General Secretariat on 20 May. In a statement after the committee's meeting yesterday German Ambassador Tono Eitel, chairman of the Sanctions Committee, expressed great satisfaction because the committee adopted the procedures after this long period of unjustified waiting.

The approval came after several weeks of premeditated obstruction by the U.S. Government. This obstruction was denounced by international public opinion and diplomatic quarters inside and outside the Security Council.

The 14 members of the Sanctions Committee approved a long time ago the implementation of the formula of oil for food, medicine, and the other basic needs of the Iraqi people.

In statements to journalists after the conclusion of the Sanctions Committee's session, Ambassador Nizar Hamdun, Iraq's permanent envoy to the United Nations, said it has been more than six months since Iraq and the UN General Secretariat started their dialogue on the issue of oil in exchange for food, medicine, and other basic needs. This, he said, is equal to the time needed to implement the agreement to ensure that the Iraqi people will benefit from the arrival of these humanitarian supplies.

He added that this situation was caused by the U.S. delegation's intransigent position and its unjustified procrastination and delaying tactics.

He stressed that this U.S. policy was driven by political motivations and plans intended to inflict more damage on the welfare of the Iraqi people and achieve goals that are unrelated to the UN Charter or resolutions, or to the accepted international norms and measures.

Ambassador Hamdun said that from a technical point of view Iraq could have started exporting oil and obtaining the food and medicine necessary to improve the Iraqi people's living conditions in March or April at the most. He stressed that the U.S. Government is fully responsible for the additional suffering of the Iraqi people because of its intransigent positions on the measures related to the implementation of the memorandum of understanding between Iraq and the UN General Secretariat.

Iraq: Al-Anbari Reacts to UN Committee Approval of Oil Sales

JN0908125496 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1120 GMT 9 Aug 96

[Interview with 'Abd-al-Amir al-Anbari, head of the Iraqi delegation to the oil-for-food talks with the United Nations, by Kamal Tarabayh on 9 August; place not given—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Al-Anbari] We have taken three important steps. The first is that Iraq and the UN General Secretariat signed a memorandum of understanding to facilitate the implementation of the relevant resolution, which contains complicated and sometimes conflicting procedures and provisions. The memorandum will allow us to facilitate the application of the resolution, in cooperation with the UN General Secretariat and the other concerned parties. On 19 July, we reached an agreement with the General Secretariat on a plan for importing and distributing foodstuffs and other civilian equipment. On 8 August, the Security Council, or the Sanctions Committee at the Security Council, approved the simplified procedures in order to endorse agreements reached under the resolution with oil companies and the importers of the humanitarian needs.

Some steps remain to be taken by the General Secretariat, including the appointment of a staff to test the oil and monitor the distribution of civilian materials inside Iraq. A limited number of staff will be in Iraq. The UN secretary general should then present a report to the Security Council saying that all the necessary arrangements for starting the implementation of the resolution have been completed. Afterward, the resolution will take effect as of the first minute of that day.

[Tarabayh] Dr. al-Anbari, how much oil will be exported?

[Al-Anbari] As you know, the resolution does not define the quantity of oil, but defines the revenues that can be obtained as a result of certain quantities of oil. These revenues were estimated at $2 billion every six months. The issue will now depend on the prevailing prices, which will specify the quantities of oil Iraq will export. Most oil industry observers expect that the quantities of Iraqi oil that will be pumped into the markets will range from 750,000 to 800,000 barrels per day.

[Tarabayh] Will oil be exported through the Iraqi-Turkish pipeline?

[Al-Anbari] Oil will be exported through the outlets available to Iraq, including the Turkish port of Ceyhan in the north and the Iraqi port of al-Bakr in the south. Both ports are allowed to do so under the resolution.

[Tarabayh] What about the plan for distributing foodstuffs and medicine?

[Al-Anbari] A comprehensive plan was approved under which the Iraqi Government will import all foodstuffs and medical equipment and will distribute them in the three northern governorates. The UN humanitarian program, as you know, does not allow the presence of Iraqi authorities in these three governorates — Dahuk, al- Sulaymaniyah, and Irbil — for exceptional, known reasons. Therefore, the Iraqi Government agreed that the program will distribute these humanitarian needs on behalf of the Iraqi Government. But the issue of contracting, importing, and approving the kind and quantities of these materials will be the duty of the Iraqi Government throughout the country in order to guarantee fair distribution and low cost of the importing and distributing process inside the country.

[Tarabayh] My last question, Dr. al-Anbari, is: Why did the U.S. Administration finally give the green light for this project after a prolonged procrastination?

[Al-Anbari] The list of simplified procedures was fully discussed by all member states, including the U.S. delegation, during 24 unofficial sessions at the headquarters of the French mission in New York. At the end of these talks, agreement was reached on everything, and no delegation has any objection. Yet, for electoral or political reasons, the United States preferred to delay its final approval of the list for approximately one month. It was the only country to do that, while all the other member states complied with their agreements during the aforementioned session. Finally, there is no room to delay the issue for long, because it will affect the credibility of the United Nations and the work of the Sanctions Committee. Therefore, the approval of these procedures should have taken place sooner or later.

[Tarabayh] Dr. 'Abd-al-Amir al-Anbari, thank you for this interview.

[Al-Anbari] You are welcome.

Iraq: Oil Sales Seen as Step Toward 'Total Lifting' of Embargo

JN1108095996 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0630 GMT 11 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Baghdad, 11 Aug (INA) — AL-THAWRAH notes that the world welcomed the Sanction Committee's approval of the list of procedures for imports and exports and the mechanism to implement the formula of oil for food, medicine, and other basic needs. The paper says this is a step toward a total lifting of the embargo imposed on Iraq and Iraq's reassumption of its role in the international community.

In an article published today, AL-THAWRAH, which speaks for the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party, says: The fact that the world, especially Europe, welcomed this step emphasizes a growing international desire to deal with Iraq, which is an important country in this vital part of the world. Iraq can establish real and balanced relations with countries that respect their commitments, without any interference in internal affairs and in line with the UN Charter and the rules of international law.

The newspaper adds: In this context, everybody knows that Iraq is known for its credibility in establishing relations with others. If we look at the volume of trade before the embargo was imposed, we will find that Iraq had broad relations with many countries. Iraq always expressed its commitment to its pledges and worked to promote its relations with the international community. The majority of countries that seek freedom, progress, and prosperity for their peoples hold Iraq in high esteem.

Israel: Netanyahu To Resume Talks With Palestinians 'Next Week'

TA1108150496 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1400 GMT 11 Aug 96

[Report by political correspondent Udi Segal]

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu plans to resume the negotiations with the Palestinians on all tracks next week. The message the prime minister will transfer to the Palestinian Authority is unequivocal: I am determined not to give in one iota on Jerusalem. There is nothing to discuss on that issue. The moment you understand that, we can make progress in the negotiations, with the first issue on the agenda being Hebron.

Defense Minister Yitzhaq Mordekhay will meet with Yasir 'Arafat and the heads of the Palestinian security services later this week and present them with the new guidelines Israel is demanding be included in the Hebron redeployment agreement. The new agreement will not be exactly the same as the one worked out with the previous government. The main change is the introduction of additional Israeli forces into Hebron, as well as increased Israeli security control of the Palestinian area. There is no finalized plan yet, but those are the guidelines. The defense minister is expected to work out the refined Hebron redeployment plan in the coming days and present it to the prime minister.

[Later in the same newsreel, IDF Radio reports that Internal Security Minister Avigdor Qahalani said today, during a tour of Ma'ale Adumim, that the Hebron redeployment will take place very soon after the final problems are resolved. In a recorded passage, Qahalani says in English: "It will be soon, I think. What we are trying to do is to try to see how we can withdraw from this area and to keep the security in our hands. This is the only problem we have."]

The prime minister's plans to resume the talks with the Palestinians next week are linked to the crisis with Foreign Minister David Levi. Mr. Netanyahu plans to wait for Levi's return from the United States on 14 August and then decide who will head the steering committee for the negotiations with the Palestinians. The real reason for the crisis between the two revolves around this issue. Netanyahu wants former Chief of Staff Dan Shomron, but he also wants the appointment to be acceptable to Levi, thereby ending the crisis with him; however, Netanyahu will not give into Levi at any price. Netanyahu does not view the crisis with Levi as endangering his government and is not prepared to accept any compromise regarding his sole control over the navigation of the negotiations on the Palestinian track. If the crisis ends in Levi's resignation, the prime minister plans to take the Foreign Ministry portfolio for himself. He does not have another candidate for the post at present.

Israel: Defense Spokesman—No Mordekhay-'Arafat Meeting on Agenda

TA1108181996 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1800 GMT 11 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The situation regarding Defense Minister Yitzhaq Mordekhay's upcoming meeting with Yasir 'Arafat is unclear. Political circles in Jerusalem say the meeting is slated to take place at the end of this week or during the coming one, but the Defense Ministry spokesman said that no such meeting is on the agenda.

The political circles told our political correspondent Shlomo Raz that at the meeting, the defense minister will present Israel's position on the government's plan for the deployment of IDF [Israel Defense Forces] troops in Hebron. The political circles stressed that the implementation of this plan is contingent on the Palestinians' abiding by their commitments in Jerusalem and pursuing the counterterrorism endeavor.

In view of the contradictory views reported to our political correspondent, however, it is unclear whether and when the meeting between the defense minister and the Palestinian Authority chief will be held.

Israel: Netanyahu—No 'Progress' Unless PA Closes Jerusalem Offices

TA1108101096 Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 11 Aug 96 p 1

[Report by JERUSALEM POST Staff and news agencies]

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu said on Friday [9 August] that he would not move forward in the peace talks unless the Palestinian Authority [PA] shuts down its offices in Jerusalem.

"We cannot make progress in negotiations with the Palestinian Authority as long as there are violations (of the Oslo accords) in Jerusalem and in every instance we will act to close down offices operating illegally in Jerusalem," Netanyahu told the cabinet on Friday. [passage omitted]

Netanyahu also criticized Internal Security Minister Avigdor Qahalani for the compromise he made last week with PA Council member Hatim 'Abd-al-Qadir.

The PA legislator had opened an office in his east Jerusalem home earlier this month to serve his constituents.

Qahalani ordered the office closed, but then settled for a declaration by 'Abd-al-Qadir that the office had no connection to the PA.

Netanyahu said he was not satisfied with the agreement.

"I gave an unequivocal directive to the internal security minister to close the office of Hatim 'Abd-al-Qadir... and I request that these directives be carried out," Netanyahu told the cabinet.

Israel: Netanyahu Proposes Syria Negotiations Without Preconditions

TA1208105996 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1000 GMT 12 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Netanyahu this morning met Israeli Arab mayors and promised to act to close the gaps between Jews and Arabs in Israel. Our correspondent Adam Shuv reports.

[Begin recording] [Shuv] The head of the Arab local councils told Netanyahu that the Arab sector is being discriminated against and that there is no equality between Jews and Arabs. Netanyahu admitted that there are gaps, sometimes even large gaps. He promised that this government will bring about full equality.

[Netanyahu] All of the people here are Israeli citizens with equal rights and should have an equal opportunity to develop, prosper, and succeed.

[Shuv] The Arab mayors are used to these kind of promises and are skeptical. As far as declarations go, however, it seems as though today they heard what they wanted to hear.

After his meeting with the Arab mayors, Netanyahu rushed to a briefing of Arab correspondents — not only from Israel, but from the emirates and the Palestinian Authority as well. Netanyahu told them the government has offered Syria to solve the Lebanon problem in the first stage. He stressed, however, that this does not constitute a precondition for negotiations with al-Asad.

[Netanyahu, in English — broadcast in progress] ...and my approach to this is to say to Syria: We are not going to impose on you starting conditions. Don't impose on us. Bring anything you want on the table; we'll bring anything we want. Let's begin to negotiate. I have suggested that whereas Mr. al-Asad can bring anything he wants to the table, it seems to me that there is something that we agree on — at least ostensibly agree on. [end recording]

Israel: Tzur Reports Positive Atmosphere at Monitoring Group

TA0808155696 Tel Aviv IDF Radio in Hebrew 1400 GMT 8 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The first meeting of the Lebanon monitoring committee appointed to implement the understandings reached in the wake of Operation Grapes of Wrath ended in al-Naqurah in south Lebanon today. The head of the Israeli delegation, Brigadier General David Tzur, said after the meeting that the committee dealt with organizational and administrative issues which will serve as a basis for future meetings. The committee is made up of U.S., French, Syrian, Lebanese, and Israeli representatives. Our correspondent Qobi Mandel reports:

[Begin recording] [Mandel] The Israeli delegation, which left for the monitoring committee's session at the UN headquarters in al- Naqurah at 1000 [0700 GMT], is headed by Brig. Gen. David Tzur, commander of the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] liaison unit with foreign forces. It also includes Captain Sharon Afeq and Foreign Ministry representative Aviv Shir-On. After the meeting, which lasted one and a half hours, Brig. Gen. Tzur presented the initial understanding reached: As of today, the committee — which is cochaired by the United States and France and also includes Syrian and Lebanese representatives — will start to act on any complaint regarding the violation of the understandings.

[Tzur] The first meeting of the monitoring committee headed by the United States and France and including the Syrian, Lebanese, and Israeli delegations was held today. The committee discussed organizational and administrative issues only. The atmosphere was businesslike and positive.

[Mandel] Foreign Ministry representative Aviv Shir-On also said the atmosphere in today's meeting was businesslike, with no handshakes being exchanged.

[Shir-On] The significance of the meeting lies in the very fact that it was held. We did not conduct political negotiations on the peace process, but in our region the very meeting of Israeli, Syrian, and Lebanese representatives is significant in itself.

[Mandel] Now it remains to be seen when the committee will convene to discuss a complaint lodged by one of the sides and what will the results be. [end recording]

Israel: Netanyahu Sends 'Arafat Sharp Message on Praise for 'Ayyash

TA1108180096 Jerusalem Channel 2 Television Network in Hebrew 1700 GMT 11 Aug 96

[Aharon Barne'a video report]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] A crisis is developing between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. Today, Yasir 'Arafat threatened to turn to international arbitration if the negotiations are not renewed immediately. In an emergency meeting of the Fatah Central Committee in Cairo, it was decided to turn to the Security Council.

Our correspondent 'Imanu'el Rosen reports that the prime minister's bureau sent 'Arafat a sharp message today in response to his latest remarks praising the actions of The Engineer, Yahya 'Ayyash. Our correspondents Yoram Binur and Aharon Barne'a report:

[Begin recording] [Barne'a] When 'Arafat returned to Gaza this afternoon, he was forced to deal with a new humiliation from Netanyahu, who told AL-QUDS that there will be no Palestinian state.

['Arafat, in English] It is not his business; it is my business and the Palestinian people business. We will achieve our goal for independent Palestinian state. [passage omitted] [end recording]

Israel: 'Sources' React to Iranian Biological Weapons 'Threat'

TA1208100496 Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew 12 Aug 96 p 7

[Report by Ben Kaspit, Yosi Levi, and Eli Qamir from London]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Yesterday's edition of the British newspaper, THE SUNDAY TIMES, reported in large headlines that Iran possesses biological weapons and has recently been making efforts to develop stockpiles of these weapons in order to carry out terrorist attacks. Senior Israeli and U.S. intelligence sources confirmed that Tehran intends to use these deadly weapons against the United States and Israel. [passage omitted]

Sources at the Prime Minister's Office refused to make any official comment on the abovementioned revelations of Iranian activity. Off the record, the sources said that Israel was aware of the Iranian efforts, monitoring them, and even taking action against them in various forums.

At the same time, a senior military source said: "The Iranian regime poses a huge threat and not only to Israel. Iran is investing tremendous efforts in acquiring nonconventional weapons, and once it has them it will not hesitate to use them."

Israel: Defense Official To 'Finalize' Phantom Deal With Turkey

TA1208110696 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 12 Aug 96 p A2

[Report by Aluf Ben]

[FBIS Translated Text] Defense Ministry Director General David 'Ivri will leave for Turkey within two weeks in order to finalize the agreement on the upgrading of Turkish Phantom jets by the Israeli Aircraft Industries [IAI].

'Ivri's visit, which was scheduled to take place last week, was put off at the request of the Turkish Government which did not want to host a senior Israeli official on the eve of Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan's trip to Iran.

Israeli sources said yesterday that Erbakan would agree to the signing of the new defense agreement with Israel. The Turkish defense establishment attributes great importance to the purchase of technologies and equipment from Israel seeing as the United States and Western European countries have imposed limitations on the supply of weapons to Turkey against the background of human rights violations.

Israel: Levi, Sharon Leave for Visit to U.S.

TA1008192096 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1900 GMT 10 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister David Levi and National Infrastructure Minister Ari'el Sharon left for New York to attend the wedding of a right-wing activist, our correspondents Shlomo Raz and Gil Litman report.

Levi yesterday informed the prime minister's bureau of his trip to the United States. Binyamin Netanyahu approved it and will serve as acting foreign minister until Levi's return on Thursday [15 August]. Levi's close associates said that the foreign minister's absence will serve as a lull in the crisis in relations between Netanyahu and Levi.

Israel: Netanyahu Reportedly Assures Mubarak of Commitment to Talks

NC0908171396 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1615 GMT 9 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] An authoritative Egyptian source has revealed that Egypt has begun consultations with Israel to reach a compromise formula making it possible to resume the Syrian-Israeli peace negotiations. The source declined, however, to confirm or deny a news report carried by the Israeli army radio that the

Israeli prime minister's political adviser visited Cairo yesterday.

The progovernment Egyptian newspaper AL-MASA' today cited the Egyptian president as saying that he had received a message from Netanyahu informing him of his intention to implement the agreements pertaining to the peace process and expressing his willingness to resume negotiations on the Syrian track.

Israel: Levi 'Determined' To Resign if Not Made 'Full Partner'

TA1108101296 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 11 Aug 96 p A3

[Report by Yosi Werther]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Efforts to resolve the crisis between Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu and Foreign Minister David Levi continued last night but without any tangible results. Levi wanted to announce his resignation at the end of last week, but his associates, led by SHAS [Torah Observing Sephardim] leader Arye Der'i, persuaded him to wait.

Levi's confidants said yesterday that he was "determined" to resign his post unless understandings were reached which would make Levi feel like a full partner on all the political developments. Nevertheless, the foreign minister's associates stressed that Levi would not lead the Gesher movement out of the coalition. He would prefer to wait several months and evaluate the government's performance, particularly with regard to political issues but also in the social-economic sphere, before deciding on his future steps. [passage omitted]

The foreign minister's supporters said that "Levi is prepared to execute Israel's foreign policy as determined exclusively by Netanyahu; however, the foreign minister fears that even this will be denied him since Netanyahu prefers to implement policy through his team of advisers, headed by Dore Gold. If this is the case, Levi will not continue as foreign minister."

On Friday [9 August], Knesset Member [MK] Arye Der'i and contractor David Appel, a Levi crony, visited the foreign minister at his home in Bet She'an in the early afternoon. After a long discussion, they drove to the Jerusalem office of Avigdor Lieberman, the director general of the Prime Minister's Office. Some progress was made at these talks. Afterwards Der'i returned to Bet She'an and spent several more hours at Levi's house.

Sources close to the foreign minister said that Levi and Netanyahu had reached some general understandings on working together. The same sources, however, noted that Levi was skeptical and even suspicious of Netanyahu's promises.

Gesher officials said: "On the surface, it appears that Netanyahu understands he must include Levi in everything, but the prime minister refuses to commit himself to this in a way that will mollify and reassure Levi. Our aim now is to preclude another crisis in two or three weeks. The thing is, Levi is afraid that in a few days he will read about another mission by Dore Gold in the newspapers, and then he will really have no choice but to resign."

[Tel Aviv MA'ARIV in Hebrew on 11 August carries a similar report by Yo'av Limor and Ben Kaspi on page 3 which writes: "Levi's associates said that the foreign minister is not interested in achieving a 'pinpointed' solution to the crisis but hopes to reach an agreed-upon formula that will enable him to work together with the prime minister for the next four years." MA'ARIV notes that "in the framework of the current contacts, attempts are being made to resolve a series of problems. One of the key issues on the agenda is who will head the steering committee for the negotiations with the Palestinians. Levi has still not agreed to Dan Shomron's candidacy, and last week, the candidacy of reserve Major General Yosi Peled, who is a member of the Likud Party, was also proposed. Other potential candidates are Lieutenant General (reserves) Moshe Levi and Major General (reserves) Avraham Tamir, a former director general of the Foreign Ministry.

["At the same time, an attempt is being made to formulate 'orderly working procedures' between the prime minister and the foreign minister. Netanyahu has already proposed that Levi make a series of political appointments at the Foreign Ministry following the change of governments. Levi has already ordered six ambassadors who were appointed by the previous government to return to Israel."] [passage omitted]

Israel: Bethlehem Closed to Israeli Traffic Following Disturbances

TA1008130296 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0400 GMT 10 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In Bethlehem, dozens of Hamas [Islamic Resistance Movement] supporters demonstrated outside the Palestinian police headquarters yesterday. They demanded the release of Hamas detainees held without trial by the Palestinian security forces.

The Israeli army closed Bethlehem to Israeli traffic until the end of the disturbances.

Israel: 'Compensation' for Oslo Accords Promised to Settlers

TA1208112696 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1000 GMT 12 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Interior Minister Eliyahu Suissa promised to transfer 15 million shekels to the settlements in Judaea and Samaria as compensation for the Oslo agreements. In a meeting with leaders of the Council of Jewish Settlements in Judaea, Samaria, and Gaza during a tour of the settlement of Psagot, the interior minister said he favors the executions of the plans frozen by the previous government to expand settlements and to initiate new plans. I have seen a lot of empty spaces during my tour, and there is no reason why they should remain deserted, Suissa said. Our correspondent Gay Qotev reports that council leaders expressed their satisfaction with the interior minister's policy, saying at stake is the rectification of the distortions of recent years.

Jordan: King Leaves for Two-Day 'Working Visit' to Saudi Arabia

JN1108153696 Amman Radio Jordan Network in Arabic 1500 GMT 11 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] His Majesty King Husayn left Amman today for Jeddah on an official two-day working visit to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, during which he will hold talks with King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al'Aziz, custodian of the two holy mosques, and senior Saudi officials, on relations between the two fraternal countries and means of promoting them in all fields. They will also discuss Arab and regional issues of joint interest.

His Majesty King Husayn was seen off at the airport by His Highness Crown Prince Hasan, a number of princes and his majesty's advisers, the ministers, the chairman of the joint chiefs of staff, the director of the Public Security Department, the director of the Civil Defense Department, a number of state and military officials, and the Saudi charge d'Affaires in Amman.

His Highness Prince Hasan took the constitutional oath before his majesty the king and the ministers as regent during his majesty's absence from the homeland.

Princes 'Abdallah, Faysal, 'Ali, Hamzah, and Hashim, his majesty the king's sons; the prime minister; the Senate president; the House of Representatives speaker; the Royal Hashemite Court chief; the king's adviser for tribal affairs; the post and telecommunications minister; the industry and trade minister; and the imam of the royal household, left with the king.

Jordan: Al-Kabariti Hails Saudi-Jordan Summit's 'Identity of Views'

MM1208111196 London AL-HAYAH in Arabic 12 Aug 96 pp 1,6

[Report by 'Abdallah al-Shihri and Mustafa Shihab in Riyadh: "Al-Kabariti Tells AL-HAYAH: The Saudi-Jordanian Summit Examined How To Combat Terrorism"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Talks at the first Saudi-Jordanian summit since 1990 between Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz and the Jordanian Monarch, King Husayn Bin-Talal, at the Jeddah al-Salam Palace yesterday evening, focused on developments in the peace process, the situation in the Gulf region, and how to combat terrorism, in addition to boosting security and economic cooperation.

An atmosphere of "openness and sincerity" prevailed at the talks, held in the presence of several Saudi officials, in particular Crown Prince 'Abdallah Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz; Prince Sultan Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, the second deputy prime minister and defense and aviation minister; Prince Nayif Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, the interior minister; and Dr. 'Abd- al-'Aziz al-Khuwaytir, minister of state. Attending on the Jordanian side were Prime Minister 'Abd-al-Karim al-Kabariti; Chief of the Royal Court 'Awni al-Khasawinah; the speakers of the Upper House of Parliament and the House of Representatives Ahmad al-Lawzi and Sa'd Hayil Surur; the ministers of trade and industry, and communications; and Humaydi al-Fayiz, King Husayn's adviser on tribal affairs.

Al-Kabariti told AL-HAYAH that the Saudi-Jordanian summit examined extensively the developments in the peace process, how to combat terrorism, and ways of boosting bilateral relations by building bridges of mutual trust," and stressed that "there was a complete identity of views between the two sides."

In response to a question, al-Kabariti said that the Jordanian monarch conveyed to King Fahd his thanks and appreciation for the Saudi decision "to open doors in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to Jordanian workers" and pointed out that a Saudi delegation recently contracted 2,500 teachers in Amman.

Commenting on the Jordanian position with regard to the Israeli proposal of "Lebanon first," al-Kabariti said: "We do not have an official Jordanian position, because this now concerns brotherly Lebanon, and we hope that an attempt is made to enable the Syrian and Lebanese sides to resume the negotiations and achieve an Israeli withdrawal from the Arab lands occupied in 1967."

On Jordanian-Iraqi relations, al-Kabariti said: "Official relations with Iraq can only be described as normal. Trade issues between us and them are governed by a trade protocol which defines the volume and specifications." He announced that the Jordanian monarch will visit some Gulf states later.

King Husayn's current visit is his second this year. He paid an earlier visit to the Kingdom last February and met with Crown Prince 'Abdallah Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, but was unable to meet with King Fahd, who was convalescing.

Observers believe that his current visit, due to end this afternoon, and his meeting with King Fahd "will crown the normalization process between the two countries which was started in summer 1995." This view is supported by the fact that King Fahd was at the forefront of those welcoming the Jordanian monarch at the aircraft steps, in the company of Prince 'Abdallah and Prince Sultan. It was also noticed that King Husayn was accompanied by five of his sons, 'Abdallah, Faysal, 'Ali, Hamzah, and Hashim. [passage omitted]

Jordan: Royal Court Chief Discusses Saudi Visit, Ties With Kuwait

NC1208081396 Cairo Voice of the Arabs in Arabic 0510 GMT 12 Aug 96

[Telephone interview with 'Awn al-Khasawinah, chief of Jordan's Royal Hashemite Court, in Jeddah, by Fayiz al-Miliji in Cairo; date not given; from the "Dialogue From Afar" program—recorded]

[FBIS Translated Text] [al-Miliji] We welcome Mr. 'Awn al-Khasawinah to the Voice of the Arabs.

[Al-Khasawinah] Thank you very much.

[Al-Miliji] At the beginning of this dialogue, let us discuss the importance of this visit in restoring relations between the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan to what they were before, particularly since the talks between King Fahd and King Husayn are the first of their kind since the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.

[Al-Khasawinah] This visit crowns a series of contacts, the objective of which has been to restore Arab solidarity to what it was previously, particularly in light of the distinguished relations between the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and between the two royal families. Of course, his majesty the king has held talks with Saudi Crown Prince 'Abdallah before, but these are his first talks with King Fahd, custodian of the two holy mosques. We hope these talks will be crowned by the restoral of Arab solidarity. Also, we can only express our gratitude for the valuable and honorable efforts of our big sister, Egypt. As you noted, the Arab summit that was held recently in Cairo gave great impetus to the restoral of solidarity in Arab relations.

[Al-Miliji] Mr. al-Khasawinah, since this visit is considered a new start for relations between Jordan and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, we would like to learn first and foremost how these relations are proceeding and how you would describe them these days.

[Al-Khasawinah] I believe that we can describe these relations as excellent, praise be to God. I would also like to remind the listeners that relations have always been excellent between Jordan and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. We hope these talks will restore relations to their former status so they will be an example to be emulated among all Arab countries.

[Al-Miliji] Mr. al-Khasawinah, could we discuss the meetings the Arab arena is witnessing these days at the summit level? King Husayn has participated extensively in these meetings. He met with Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad and Palestinian President Yasir 'Arafat, and the most recent contact is his visit to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. How do you evaluate these meetings and what does Jordan expect from them?

[Al-Khasawinah] At this crucial stage our Arab nation is going through, Jordan expects to restore things among the Arab countries to what they were like. Jordan hopes to open a new chapter of relations based on the principles of noninterference in the affairs of others, mutual respect, and developing relations in the interest of all the Arab people.

[Al-Miliji] Could we move on to discuss relations between you and the rest of the Arab Gulf countries, particularly Kuwait? Some efforts have been made to restore relations between you and Kuwait to what they were like before. Where have these efforts got to so far?

[al-Khasawinah] We believe these efforts are proceeding in the right direction. We are committed to working on restoring solidarity among the Arab countries. Our relations with the rest of the Gulf countries have improved markedly, and we hope the same thing will happen with Kuwait.

[Al-Miliji] Mr. Khasawinah, His Majesty King Husayn recently met with Israeli Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu. Jordan has also signed a peace treaty with Israel. What role could Jordan play at this time to push forward the peace process on the other tracks—the Palestinian, Syrian, and Lebanese ones?

[Al-Khasawinah] Jordan believes that the peace process is moving on. As a country that is living in peace with Israel after signing the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty, it is in our interest for a just, comprehensive, and permanent peace to be established in the Middle East. This means that we have to push the negotiation process on all these tracks. We will not arrange solutions between Israel and the other Arab countries; however, if all the sides ask us to, we will work to push the peace process forward.

[Al-Miliji] Are there any specific proposals in this regard?

[Al-Khasawinah] At this point in time there are no specific proposals, but there are some general ideas, all of which contribute to pushing the peace process.

[Al-Miliji] Mr. al-Khasawinah, chief of the Royal Hashemite Court, to conclude this dialogue over the open phone lines between Cairo and Jeddah,we thank you very much. We wish you much success on your visit to Jeddah, in which you are accompanying the Jordanian monarch.

[Al-Khasawinah] I thank you.

Lebanon: New Draft Election Bill Referred to Chamber of Deputies

NC0908191396 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1815 GMT 9 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] This evening the Cabinet approved an election bill that is in harmony with the ruling of the Constitutional Council. It referred the new bill and a statement explaining the reasons that made it necessary to the Chamber of Deputies.

The Cabinet issued a decree providing for an extraordinary parliamentary session to begin today and end on 31 August.

President Ilyas al-Hirawi, who chaired the Cabinet meeting, reviewed the Constitutional Council's ruling and voiced full respect for its decisions in its capacity as the highest independent authority in the country. He noted that its ruling must be implemented.

At the beginning of the meeting President al-Hirawi briefed the Cabinet on the results of his recent summit with Syrian President Hafiz al-Asad, at which they emphasized their total rejection of the Lebanon-first proposal and declared that the Lebanese and Syrian negotiating tracks must remain parallel in view of the two countries' unity of views, objectives, and methods.

Al-Hirawi remarked that it is the unity of the Lebanese and Syrian positions that will ensure liberation, bring about a just peace, and serve the interests of the Lebanese and Syrian people.

Agriculture Minister Shawqi Fakhuri, who announced the Cabinet's decisions, said that the new election bill will arrive at the Chamber of Deputies Secretariat tomorrow. He said that the bill can be summarized in the statement that the announced date for the parliamentary elections will remain the same.

President al-Hirawi met at B'abda Palace earlier today with Chamber of Deputies Speaker Nabih Birri and Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri to discuss election affairs in light of the Constitutional Council's recent ruling. Justice Minister Bahij Tabbarah and Interior Minister Michel al-Murr attended these meetings. Judge Joseph Sha'ul, chairman of the State Consultative Council, attended part of these meetings.

Prime Minister al-Hariri confirmed that the parliamentary elections will take place on the previously announced date unless legal and constitutional circumstances make that impossible; in that case they will be postponed for one or two weeks. Al-Hariri remarked that on Monday [12 August] he will make a definite decision on whether he will be a candidate.

Lebanon: Fadlallah Warns U.S. of 'Islamic Vietnam' in Iran

NC0908175796 Beirut AL-DIYAR in Arabic 8 Aug 96 p 5

[FBIS Translated Text] 'Allamah Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah has stated that the new U.S. sanctions bill is an illustration of the inferiority complex from which U.S. President Bill Clinton suffers. He said "this law has failed before even was adopted." He emphasized that "Iran has always excelled in political defiance of the United States" and added that "the world is not a U.S. ranch."

Speaking during his weekly Koranic lesson, Fadlallah said that a U.S. military strike against Iran is unlikely at this time.

He added: "The bombing against the United States during the Atlanta Olympic Games gave the impression that during this president's term the United States has not been able to defend its military forces abroad, its means of transport at home, or the Olympic Games, which have special global significance in the world of sports. This can have a negative impact on the current president's reelection chances."

Meanwhile Shaykh Sa'id Sha'ban, leader of the Islamic Unification Movement, urged the Arabs to punish the United States by reemphasizing their ties with Libya, Iran, and Iraq. He called on them to cooperate to thwart the U.S. objective of embargoing these countries.

Shaykh Sha'ban said he believes that Europe will not heed the U.S. wishes, particularly as it has numerous interests in the Middle East and Iran. He declared that the United States will find itself the big loser as a result of its recent decisions.

[In a related item, Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic at 1615 GMT on 9 August reports: "'Allamah Sayyid Muhammad Husayn Fadlallah has warned the United States that its adventure in Iraq is different from any likely adventure against Iran because that would involve it in an Islamic Vietnam. Fadlallah called on Muslims to boycott U.S. goods and accused Israel, in coordination with the United States, of seeking to destroy the importance of the Israel-Lebanon Monitoring Group. On Israel's Lebanon-first proposal, he said it is not a serious proposal but a propaganda ploy that seeks to improve Israel's image while avoiding implementing UN Security Council Resolution 425."]

Lebanon: Hizballah Chief Meets Syria's Khaddam, Discusses ILMG

NC0908145796 Cairo MENA in Arabic
1420 GMT 9 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Beirut, 9 Aug (MENA)—Lebanon's Hizballah has warned of the danger of what it described as the "twisted Israeli proposals" represented by the recent so-called "Lebanon first" offer.

An announcement says that Hizballah Secretary General Hasan Nasrallah discussed this issue in Damascus yesterday with Syrian Vice President 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam. They emphasized the importance of the major role played by the Islamic Resistance in southern Lebanon and the western al-Biqa' in confronting the occupation forces and thwarting their schemes.

The statement says that during the meeting Nasrallah and Khaddam discussed the working mechanism of the Israel-Lebanon Monitoring Group [ILMG] which held its first meeting in al-Naqurah, south Lebanon, yesterday. The statement adds that an agreement was reached that Lebanon and Syria would inform the ILMG of all the violations perpetrated by the Israeli occupation forces against civilians in Lebanon.

Lebanon: SLA Leader Said Exploring Asylum Prospects in France

NC1008161496 Beirut AL-DIYAR in Arabic
3 Aug 96 p 1

[Report by Badra Bakhus al-Faghghali from Paris]

[FBIS Translated Text] Political sources in Paris have revealed that General Antoine Lahd, commander of the South Lebanese Army [SLA], has made a secret visit to Paris where he met with some officials of the French Foreign Ministry to discuss the prospect of securing permanent residence in France for himself and five of his senior aides.

According to the sources, Gen. Lahd made this decision after meeting with his friend, Israeli Defense Minister Yitzhaq Mordekhay, and being briefed by him on the likely change in his status if Israel carries out a unilateral withdrawal from south Lebanon up to the international border. The sources said that Gen. Lahd suffered acute emotional distress when he realized that he and his army's officers and men will pay a high price for the decision that no one had expected the Likud government to make.

The sources believe that the SLA's fate is a complex and delicate issue because approximately 6,000 families in the border strip are directly or indirectly connected with this army and Israel is not exactly enthusiastic about resettling them on its territory. The sources point out that it is clear that both the Likud and the Labor Party in Israel do not think that "their moral commitment to these Lebanese families" should prevent the adoption of important decisions that serve Israel's higher interests.

Syria: Ba'th Party Official—Talks Can Resume Where They Left Off

JN1108194696 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1515 GMT 11 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Comrade 'Abdallah al-Ahmar, assistant secretary general of the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party, met with the participants in the central party indoctrination course at the Higher Institute for Political Sciences at noon today. [passage omitted]

At the beginning of the meeting, the comrade assistant secretary general conveyed to the course participants the greetings of comrade leader Hafiz al-Asad, secretary general of the party and president of the republic, and his wishes for their success in their tasks. He also conveyed the greetings of the Ba'th Party National Command. [passage omitted]

Al-Ahmar then touched on Arab and world developments and changes. He discussed the regional situation and developments, especially the developments of the peace process. Noting the Arab and international efforts to advance the peace process, al-Ahmar said this process is frozen and liable to collapse because of Israel's stands, hostile and expansionist practices, and intentions which leave no doubt that they portend dangers that threaten to undermine the very bases of the peace process. He said Israel is threatening regional security and stability by proposing plans and ideas that conflict with the principles of the peace process, which is based on the resolutions and principles of international legitimacy, especially UN Security Council Resolutions 242, 338, and 425, and the land-for-peace principle.

Comrade al-Ahmar underlined the constants of Syria's principled stand, noting Syria's adherence to the peace process. He said that this stand reflects a unified Arab position on that process and enjoys comprehensive Arab and world support. He said that Syria can resume the peace talks, in case they are resumed, from the point at which they had stopped and on a clear basis based on the resolutions of the international legitimacy and the obligations and agreements that have been reached over the past five years since the beginning of the peace process in Madrid.

Comrade al-Ahmar expressed confidence in and optimism about the Arab nation's ability to bolster joint Arab action and cooperation and to overcome the weakness and dismemberment from which the Arab region has suffered for six years. He stressed the need for an effective Arab solidarity capable of affecting the world changes and developments and establishing a just, comprehensive peace that returns the land and rights to their Arab owners and provides security, stability, and prosperity for the peoples of the region.

Syria: Assassination Bid Against PFLP-GC's Ahmad Jibril 'Foiled'

JN1208083896 Amman AL-MAJD in Arabic 12 Aug 96 p 1

[FBIS Translated Text] AL-MAJD learned that Syrian and Palestinian security agencies recently foiled a U.S.-Israeli plan to assassinate Ahmad Jibril, secretary general of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command [PFLP-GC]. Palestinian Authority sources told AL-MAJD that the Syrian security forces arrested a group of Mosad agents that planned to assassinate Jibril. The group had been watching Jibril inside and outside Syria for several weeks.

The group confessed that a meeting was held in Cyprus several months ago between Israeli and U.S. agents and an Arab party. The participants in the meeting decided to assassinate Jibril. Washington accuses Jibril of being behind the Lockerbie plane bombing.

Sources within Palestinian opposition factions told AL-MAJD that Jibril, who is currently under heavy security protection, has moved his offices and residence after a technician who works with the PFLP-GC in Damascus was arrested because of suspected links with the conspirators.

Syria: Al-Asad Praised for Foiling Israeli 'Maneuvers'

JN1208063196 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 0450 GMT 12 Aug 96

[Press review]

[FBIS Translated Text] Under the headline "Israel's Attempts to Destroy Peace Process," AL-BA'TH says: As usual, President Hafiz al-Asad was clear, precise, and frank when he spelled out the conditions for resuming the peace negotiations, which have been suspended for several months. The negotiations can only be resumed on the basis of the principles and resolutions of the United Nations and international legitimacy, namely, the land-for-peace principle on which the Madrid conference was based.

AL-BA'TH says: By saying this, President al-Asad foiled all Israel's maneuvers and tricks and explained the correct foundations and principles of the peace process. These principles can make the peace process achieve a just and comprehensive peace.

AL-BA'TH says the peace process has become a regional and international contract that is binding on all parties involved in it. Therefore, Israel does not have the right to introduce any amendment or change to the foundations of the peace process. Any Israeli measure that conflicts with this process will destroy peace.

AL-BA'TH concludes: In light of current developments — Netanyahu's attempt to evade the requirements of peace by intensifying settlement activity and Judaizing the occupied Arab territories and his completely unacceptable proposals, such as Lebanon First and resuming negotiations with Syria without preconditions — it is now clear that Israel is no longer interested in peace at all.

In an editorial titled "Syrian-Lebanese Cohesion and Netanyahu's Nightmares," TISHRIN says: When Netanyahu says that he is now suffering from a real nightmare as a result of the failure of his so-called Lebanon First proposal, it reveals the extent of the hopes Israel pinned on this proposal. They are certainly great hopes that have a strategic nature.

TISHRIN says this proposal conceals a package of tragedies and disasters prepared especially by Israel for Lebanon first and Syria and the Arabs second. The first disaster will be to ignite a huge fire of sectarian sedition, fan the flames of separatist tendencies, and surrender national unity. The second disaster is the confiscation of Lebanon's independence and its hoped-for cultural and economic role in the region, the spread of Zionist hegemony, and the repetition of the experiment with self-rule in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip in Lebanon. The third disaster will be to sever all of Lebanon's ties with Syria and its Arab environment and to turn it into a base for plotting against Syria and all the Arabs.

TISHRIN says the Lebanon First proposal is, in reality, nothing more than an advanced version of the infamous 17 May agreement. Israel presented this proposal in an attractive manner. However, Lebanon, which has coalesced with Syria, found out the ugly truth of the Israeli proposal and announced its categorical rejection of it.

TISHRIN asserts that coordination with Syria has provided Lebanon with elements of strength, which enabled it to escape this deadly Zionist trap and make this poisonous proposal backfire on its authors. This is fresh evidence of the strong and effective Syrian-Lebanese cohesion, which enabled Lebanon to defeat the fiercest plot hatched by Israel, namely, the civil war.

TISHRIN concludes that Syrian-Lebanese cohesion is as hard as steel and growing harder every day. This cohesion is a major political reality in the region. It is difficult to disregard this reality when thinking about making peace. In fact, the Syrian and Lebanese tracks are the basis of a just and comprehensive peace. It is impossible to bypass this cohesion when deciding the fate of all the issues related to the region's future.

Syria: Israel Accused of Using 'Drama of Evasion' To Avoid Peace

JN1108110196 Damascus SANA in Arabic 0755 GMT 11 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Damascus, 11 Aug (SANA)—In an editorial today, the newspaper AL-THAWRAH says: Today we are watching new scenes from the drama of evasion that the rulers in Tel Aviv have been performing over the past five years, and the show is still going on, using different acts in a bid to avoid peace, bypass the bases of the peace process, entrench a policy of fait accompli and embezzlement, and impose the law and logic of the jungle.

The paper points out that the Israeli ideas lay the groundwork for nothing but a peace of capitulation and relinquishment of land and rights. They will only lead the region to more conflicts, wars, tension, and instability. Anyone who rejects the international legitimacy resolutions; tries to ignore the Madrid conference as a terms of reference; calls on the Arabs, particularly Syria, to forget the past, start over from scratch, and adapt to the status quo cannot possibly be thinking about peace or anything related to it.

One fact that should be stated clearly is that such a mentality and policy fall short of achieving peace and are much more likely to initiate war. Those with such a mentality underestimate people's intelligence and speak in terms that defy the entire world.

AL-THAWRAH adds: We are not in a hurry. Under no circumstances or pressures will we expedite solutions that encroach on our land, dignity, and sovereignty, or cut back on even one iota of our national and pan-Arab rights and land. If we are concerned about outsmarting or exposing the maneuvers of Netanyahu's government, then the world and the U.S. sponsor should also be concerned about returning to the roots of the process and forcing the Israeli rulers to abide by the terms and requirements of just peace.

Syria: Radio Dismisses Netanyahu Statements on Lebanon, Talks

JN1108154396 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1140 GMT 11 Aug 96

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] In an exposed attempt to penetrate Arab ranks and alleviate the rage of the international community, Israel under Netanyahu continues to spread fabrications and flagrant deceptive allegations.

Pretending to be baffled and astonished, Netanyahu said: We want to withdraw from southern Lebanon, but the Lebanese oppose that, and we want to resume peace talks with Syria, but the Syrians object. In fact, Lebanon, contrary to Netanyahu's allegations, has never rejected Israel's withdrawal from southern Lebanon. Rather, it daily demands such withdrawal in implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 425 which calls on Israel to unconditionally evacuate its invading troops to the truce lines, respect Lebanon's sovereignty over its territory, and not to interfere in its domestic affairs.

Syria has not rejected the resumption of talks. Rather, it demanded explicit Israeli commitment to the bases of the peace process according to the Madrid formula; that is, Resolutions 242 and 338, which stipulate that it is inadmissible to occupy others' territory by force, and the land-for-peace principle. The Syrian demand is not only legitimate, but a basic condition in view of the Netanyahu-led Likud government's evasion of the former Israeli government's obligations and the land-for-peace principle and its public rejection of withdrawal from the Golan, Jerusalem, and the West Bank. What both Lebanon and Syria reject is the Israeli attempt to deal with each country separately and drive a wedge between them. Lebanon has a bitter experience with the Israelis who drew up plans to divide it and consume it in the fire of a civil war which they fueled with funds and weapons. The Lebanese were able to extinguish that fire only with Syria's sincere help and sacrifices.

The Lebanese officials, led by President al-Hirawi, Speaker Birri, and Prime Minister al-Hariri, as well as political, economic, and public figures, expressed their absolute rejection of Israel's Lebanon First notion. President al-Hirawi said that the Lebanese and Syrian tracks are one track based on the same pillars and aims to achieve the same goal, which is the liberation of the territories and establishing a just, comprehensive peace. Al-Hirawi said that it is impossible to separate the Lebanese and Syrian tracks, and that unity of vision, objective, and action is the only way to confront Israel's continued refusal to withdraw from the occupied territories and arrive at the aspired peace.

For our part, we ask: Why does the current Israeli leadership insist on rejecting a collective Arab peace based on the will of all Arab countries and that of the international community and the international legitimacy? Why does Israel want to separate the Arab countries from each other, claiming to be willing to withdraw from one part and refusing to withdraw from another part? Why does Israel not exchange all occupied Arab territories with a permanent, comprehensive, and solid peace capable of providing security ad stability? If Israel is interested in peace, as its rulers claim, why has it unleashed intensive settlement activities in the occupied territories?

For months, Netanyahu has publicly declared his rejection of withdrawal from the Golan and southern Lebanon, Jerusalem, and the West Bank. How can the Arabs believe his peace allegations today if they are not accompanied by an explicit commitment to the Madrid bases and the land-for-peace principle? What harm does it do Netanyahu if he pledges to respect UN resolutions, the essence of the U.S. initiative, and the Madrid bases? Didn't former Prime Minister Rabin declare that peace is impossible while Israel continues its occupation of the Golan? Didn't Peres admit that the Golan is occupied Syrian territory, that peace with Syria depends on the removal of the occupation, and that peace with Syria means peace with all Arabs?

Netanyahu's fabrications cannot fool any Arab. Everybody rejected his proposals. President Mubarak recently said the Lebanon First notion is a catastrophe as far as the peace process is concerned. The Israeli prime minister should fully reconsider his stands; he should agree to full withdrawal from the occupied territories, halt settlement activity, and honor the pledges and obligations made by the former Israeli Government. The Arabs are expecting deeds rather than words. They will never be fooled by deceptive campaigns. Nobody can penetrate their unified stand or weaken their adherence to their territories and rights.

Afghanistan

Afghanistan: Two Taleban Opposition Commanders Join Government

LD1108193396 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 11 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Two Taleban commanders joined the government's forces in Ghowr Province today. Reports reaching BAKHTAR say that commanders Abdul Shokur and Gholam Nabi and 30 of their armed men joined the mojahedin and Islamic army forces in Chardara in Ghowr Province today. The esteemed Khadem Hosain, the commander of the 40th Division in Ghowr Province, welcomed them. The defecting commanders brought 50 pieces of light and heavy weapons with them. They promised to fight alongside the Islamic army against the enemies of the Islamic state.

Afghanistan: 'Fierce Fighting' Continues in Ghor Province

LD1108155096 Tehran IRNA in English 0657 GMT 11 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Kabul Aug 11 (IRNA) — Fierce fighting between government troops and Taleban militiamen is going on in the Ghor Province, central Afghanistan, while the state sources claim they have captured a number of villages in the region.

The Afghan Defense Ministry in a statement Saturday [10 August] night said that the recent victories were achieved following a counter-attack in in the Teyvareh Town. In the operation 17 Taleban troops were killed and tens of others were wounded, the statement added.

The Saturday fighting in Teyvareh, south of the Ghor Province, came after the recent 3-day conflicts in Chegcheren, capital of Ghor Province.

The government troops on Thursday [8 August] captured the provincial capital of Cheghcheran and freed troops held in captivity by the Taleban for the past two months. However, the state troops could not hold on to the city because of ammunition shortage.

At present Ghor Province is under control of the Taleban despite the growing pupular resentment.

In the recent two weeks Paktia and Paktika Provinces, in the southeast, and the Ghor and Neemroze Provinces, in center and southwest, have been scens of heavy fighting between the two sides.

The state forces have suceeded in capturing a few regions in the southeastern part of the country.

Bangladesh

Bangladesh: Foreign Minister on Renewal of Friendship Treaty With India

BK1008101196 Dhaka THE BANGLADESH OBSERVER in English 5 Aug 96 p 1, 12

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The present government feels that there is no necessity to renew the existing Indo-Bangladesh Friendship Treaty in view of the prevailing regional and international political context, Foreign Minister Abdus Samad Azad told the Jatiya Sangsad [Parliament] on Sunday [4 August], reports BSS.

Replying to a question from opposition BNP [Bangladesh Nationalist Party] member Prof. Shahidul Islam, the Minister said that the treaty signed for a term of 25 years is named as "Friendship, Cooperation and Peace Treaty" between People's Republic of Bangladesh and Republic of India which he added, would remain in force until March 18, 1997.

When a Treasury Bench Member Mr. Shajahan Khan, in a supplementary question, wanted to know whether there was any slavery clause in the treaty, Mr. Abdus Samad Azad read out the full text of the treaty signed by the then Prime Minister of Bangladesh Bangabandhu [Friend of Bengal] Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and Indian Prime Minister, Mrs Indira Gandhi.

The Foreign Minister said that the treaty was earlier placed before the Parliament and the subsequent government had acknowledged this treaty as a friendship and cooperation treaty.

Sharing of assets with Pakistan

The Foreign Minister also informed the Jatiya Sangsad that diplomatic efforts were on to resolve the issue of sharing the pre-liberation assets with Pakistan.

Replying to a question from Treasury Bench member Mirza Azam raised on behalf of him by his party colleague Mr. Sultan Mohammad Mansur Ahmed, the Minister said Bangladesh demanded more than rupees 2,400 crore in Pakistani currency in 1971 as its due share.

Stranded Non-Bengalis

Answering another question, he said more than ten lakh non-Bengalees remained stranded in Bangladesh in the wake of liberation. Of them, more than five lakh had been granted citizenship after they applied for the citizenship of Bangladesh, he added.

Mr. Abdus Samad Azad said the remaining 5,39,669 had expressed their desire to be repatriated to Pakistan.

He said under an agreement signed in Delhi in 1973 on the question of the repatriation of the stranded Pakistanis in Bangladesh and under the tripartite agreement signed in 1974, a total of 1,31,789 non-Bengalees were repatriated to Pakistan.

He said a good number of non-Bengalees being frustrated with the long process of repatriation had left camps and integrated with the local society.

The minister said in an independent survey carried by Rabeta Al Alam Al Islami [voluntary organization] in May-June 1992, a total of 2,38,093 non-Bengalees were identified who wanted to go back to Pakistan.

Mr. Abdus Samad Azad said that in 1988 a fund was created with 250 million rupees from the Pakistan government and another 50 million rupees from the Rabeta Al Alam Al Islami for the repatriation purpose.

But he pointed out that after rehabilitation of 50 families, the repatriation was stopped.

The Foreign Minister told the members that diplomatic efforts were on for expeditious repatriation of the stranded Pakistanis.

Bangladesh: India Urged To Match Efforts To Resolve Bilateral Issues

BK1108074396 Dhaka Bangladesh Radio Network in Bengali 1500 GMT 9 Aug 96

[Station commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] The recent political changes in Bangladesh and India have given the two neighboring countries a rare opportunity to contemplate their bilateral relations. The two countries share a common history and there are many similarities in their cultures. Both have a heroic past of struggle against colonial rule. However, bilateral relations between Bangladesh and India have been uneven, as many issues between them remain unresolved. Mutual mistrust and rigid attitudes have prevented the two countries from arriving at just solutions to these issues. It is now clear that the present democratically elected governments in New Delhi and Dhaka want to open a new chapter in their ties. The process of such a change has begun with the diplomatic initiative launched from both sides. Bangladeshi Foreign Secretary Farooq Sobhan is in the Indian capital to hold talks for removing the irritants in the bilateral ties. The major unresolved issue is the sharing of the common river Ganges, which originates in the Himalayan foothills and flows through northern India before entering southwestern Bangladesh.

Early in July, Indian External Affairs Secretary Salman Haider was in Dhaka for talks with the New Awami League government under the leadership of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina. It was made clear to Haider that Bangladesh wanted a permanent settlement of the water dispute. Upriver, India blocks the Ganges during the dry season, as a result of which the river's flow in Bangladesh becomes very (?lean). On the other hand, India's release of excess water at the Farakka barrage during the rainy season causes floods in Bangladesh, thereby massively damaging crops and properties.

The Bangladeshi foreign secretary carried a letter from Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina for new Indian Prime Minister Deve Gowda that calls upon the United Front government to join the new initiative with utmost sincerity.

Within the current framework of a liberalized market policy, Bangladesh has opened its doors to practically all Indian goods, but it has not received the same gesture from New Delhi. The countervailing duties and other tariff barriers must be removed if Bangladeshi exports to India are to grow. The huge trade gap against Bangladesh has created an adverse reaction among local manufacturers.

Bangladesh buys about $1 billion worth of goods from India every year. In contrast, commodities worth $50 million are exported from Bangladesh. Local traders believe that Bangladeshi products face heavy duties in the Indian market. Besides, other trade barriers prevent Bangladeshi goods from reaching the Indian market. The issue of this huge trade imbalance was discussed between the Bangladeshi foreign secretary and B.B. Ramaiah, Indian state minister for commerce. Dhaka has proposed to Indian authorities to allow uninterrupted entry of Bangladeshi goods to the markets of six northeastern Indian states in return for India's free access to the Bangladeshi market. Indian exporters are already enjoying this facility as part of the normal process of trade liberalization. India, however, has yet to open its market to Bangladeshi goods.

Bangladesh has also invited Indian manufacturers to set up industries locally under concessional tariffs. Sobhan submitted to the Indian authorities a short list of 12 goods for export to India. The Indian Commerce Ministry has been called upon to take steps to increase the access of these goods to the Indian market.

A durable solution to the Ganges water-sharing dispute and balancing of trade might constitute a part of the overall framework of a fresh initiative for developing bilateral ties. There are other issues that also deserve attention, such as transborder crime, delimitation of the maritime boundary, and the early return of Chakma tribal refugees to Bangladesh from Indian camps. Bangladesh feels that the initiative taken for bilateral ties will move toward the desired goal if progress is achieved at the foreign minister-level meeting next month. Bangladesh wants India to match its efforts to find a peaceful bilateral solution to all outstanding issues.

Bangladesh: Deadline for Depositing Illegal Weapons Extended

BK1008163996 Dhaka Bangladesh Radio Network in Bengali 1500 GMT 10 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The government has extended the deadline for depositing illegal weapons, ammunition, and explosives until the evening of 13 August. The deadline has been extended following the encouraging response to the government announcement on depositing illegal weapons. A release in Dhaka today said that the government will not take any legal action against those who deposit their illegal weapons within this extended time limit. The release added that in no circumstances will this opportunity be extended beyond the specified time limit.

Our Khulna representative reports that responding to the general amnesty, 92 illegal firearms and 83 cartridges were deposited in Khulna and Barisal divisions. The firearms include eight guns, three rifles, 13 revolvers, five home-made pistols, and 34 pipe guns. Our Narsinghdi reporter says that 19 firearms and some cartridges were deposited in this district under the general amnesty. The firearms include five foreign revolvers, three single-barrel guns, five pipe guns, two home-made guns, a rifle, a rifle with its butt chopped off, a 22-bore pistol, and a (?light machine gun).

India

India: Envoy at Geneva Reaffirms Stance; Gujral Comments on CTBT

BK1008091696 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0245 GMT 10 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The base nuclear powers and most other countries at the UN Disarmament Conference in Geneva are unwilling to enter into fresh negotiations about the draft Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty [CTBT] as a whole despite massive demands from India. A spokesman of the conference said that the margins for changing the draft treaty are extremely small. India's disarmament delegate, Miss. Arundhati Ghose, reiterated that New Delhi would refuse to give the approval needed for the CTBT to take effect. She said the nuclear powers' attempt to make India a party to the treaty through certain entry-into-effect clauses is against international law. Miss Ghose said clarifications which are not to be found in the treaty itself are of no value years later. The CTBT talks chairman, Mr. Jaap Ramaker, said his consultations have confirmed that continuing the negotiations on the draft treaty as a whole would not yield further results. The Iranian delegation also expressed reservations about the draft treaty.

The external affairs minister, Mr. I.K. Gujral, said in New Delhi yesterday that India should preserve its right to develop technology as it wants, especially when the real aim of the CTBT is to limit access to advanced technology. He was speaking after presenting the Gujarmal Modi Award for Science to defense scientist, Dr. Abdul Kalam. He said the real question today is not whether India should sign the CTBT or not, but whether Indian technological development should be bound hand and foot by other powers. Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Abdul Kalam announced the successful testing of India's third-generation heat-seeking antitank Nag missile at Chandipur.

India: Diplomat Criticizes 'Bad Faith' in Test Ban Talks

BK1008135796 Calcutta THE TELEGRAPH in English 9 Aug 96 p 1

[Report by Seema Sirohi]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] With the passage of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) looking inevitable, India's ambassador to Geneva, Ms Arundhati Ghose, has accused the nuclear weapon states of negotiating in bad faith and doing little to accommodate New Delhi's concerns.

Ms Ghose said she held only one meeting with her US counterpart, Mr John Holum, over the past 10 days and he refused to budge even an inch during the session. "It was like talking to a blank wall," she said. There was no meeting between the Indian delegation and that of the other nuclear weapon states.

She said chances for a compromise were "nil" since no one contacted her with a proposal. The only attempt was made by the Group of 21. But their formulae were "unacceptable" since they made India's signature on the text compulsory, Ms Ghose said. "It is against the law of treaties to force a country to sign. It is against international law," she added.

The US got China's approval for the CTBT following a compromise on issues relating to the inspections regime, which concerned Beijing.

"It is not surprising China's concerns were accommodated. China is a nuclear weapons power. The weapons states decided on the text, the treaty's scope and the provisions. The CTBT is their treaty," she said in a telephone interview with The Telegraph. "They did not change a comma for India," she added.

"They form their own category, their own rules. This is a period of hegemony," she said. The ambassador said the chairman of the Conference on Disarmament, Mr Jaap Ramaker, from the Netherlands, used the formula of entry into force pushed by the nuclear powers. "If he had adopted another formula, it would have been Britain, China and Russia blocking the treaty, not India," she added.

Ms Ghose's strong words were an answer to what she perceives as a "deliberate distortion of the Indian position by international powers." However, the only thing India can do at this stage, besides venting anger, is table a powerless motion on a phased withdrawal of nuclear weapons, which it plans to do today in Geneva. The proposal, offering a phased programme for nuclear disarmament by 2010, will be offered by the G-21. The idea is to force the motion on the agenda of the conference as an "expression of anger" before it concludes.

Ms Ghose, who is in the unenvious position of explaining India's stand against intense pressure, does not believe in mincing words. She feels India has been victim of a "vilification" campaign, orchestrated by Western governments.

She said: "They do a professional job. They use the Press, they start rumours. It's incredible. They did not negotiate with us in good faith when they table," she alleged.

There has been sustained criticism of India in major US newspapers, with India often being labeled the "spoiler." Editorials adopted a jeering tone when addressing what they referred to as "empty moral rhetoric" of New Delhi.

She said nuclear powers had no sound argument against India's demand for a timetable for disarmament. "They know they can't debate on the basis of logic so they accuse us of all sorts of things. If you read our statements in the conference, they follow a certain logic. We have moved, now its your turn," Ms Ghose added.

Today, at the conference, Ms Ghose today told the forum: "If the present (treaty) text is sought to be retained, I am instructed to inform the conference that India would be reluctantly obliged to oppose such an effort."

India: Chinese PNE Clause May Develop 'Double-Edge' on CTBT Stand

BK1008115296 Delhi THE ECONOMIC TIMES in English 10 Aug 96

[Report by R. Ramachandran—received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] At a Beijing meeting last December some Chinese engineers proposed using peaceful nuclear explosions [PNE's] to divert Brahmaputra [Indian river running through Assam] into the arid area of northwest China. Noting that such a scheme would be impossible with conventional methods, they observed that it could certainly be accomplished with PNE's.

Of course, China cannot unilaterally divert rivers that cut across international boundaries without violating international law. But the important point here is that the Chinese seem to be seriously considering the use of PNE's, if not today, at least sometime in the future. Diverting Brahmaputra is only one of many applications of PNE's that Chinese are envisaging. They plan to harness the energy released from underground thermonuclear explosions to generate electricity, a possibility which the Americans had seriously studied at one time and rejected it on the grounds of the prohibitive costs involved.

The Chinese have also roped in the help of Russian scientists, who had been involved in Soviet PNE's and have not much to do since Gorbachev stopped the program in 1988, to advise and formulate their plans. While changing the course of Brahmaputra will be done by blasting a 20-km chanel through a mountain range (which the Russians have hailed as a "brilliant idea"), the electricity generation concept involves explosion in an underground cavity lined with massive steel tubes which would conduct steam to drive a turbine above. The Chinese believe that this kind of controlled nuclear electricity generation would become the main energy supplier around the world in 50 years. Clearly, after the US stopped its Plowshare program in 1973 after detonating 27 PNE's devices, largely due to PNE's proliferation potential, and the Soviets ended their PNE's after 124 blasts, many of which were put to specific applications, the new Chinese thrust shows that PNE is not dead.

Indeed, the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty (NPT), which now stands extended indefinitely, continues to provide for conducting PNE's under some international supervision vide its Article V. And so does the draft text of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) currently being pushed to conclusion in Geneva. PNE's have been accommodated in CTBT at the insistence of the Chinese vide Article VIII. It provides for signatory

States to carry out PNE's after effecting suitable amendment to the Treaty when CTBT comes up for review after 10 years. It is moot, therefore, whether an open discussion of PNE's by the Chinese was just a ploy to draw world attention to their position vis-a-vis the CTBT or they indeed have an active ongoing PNE programme. So PNE's may well come back with a bang in the future when, consequent to NPT and CTBT, the capability will remain exclusively with the five weapon powers.

The Pokharan nuclear explosion of May 18, 1974, was dubbed by India as a peaceful nuclear device. It indeed was though the dividing line between a peaceful nuclear bomb and a weapon is thin and data from a PNE can be militarily significant. The choice of the site, the shape of the cavity and the yield of the Pokharan bomb were all characteristic of a PNE and the US too had known it all along as a US document declassified in 1993 shows. An analysis by Milo D Nordyke of the Lawrence Livermore Laboratories, dated May 29, 1974, states: "All the known facts appear to support the Indian statements that their nuclear test was carried out to further their PNE program."

An important PNE application envisioned by Indian scientists was mining of copper deposits in Khetri in Rajasthan. Based on the observed crater data Nordyke too had concluded: "Such a structure is strikingly similar to those depicted for the purpose of chemical mining." Despite these facts now being in open literarture, international analysts continue to portray Pokharan as a weapons test as Zia Mian and A H Nayyar do in the latest issue of The Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists.

For some reason Pokharan was not followed up with more tests. With India now forced to block the CTBT and the increasing possibility of it being taken to the General Assembly circumventing the ongoing negotiations, a decisive move by India is perhaps needed. The government may well see an answer in the double-edge device of a PNE.

India: Minister Offers Unconditional Talks With Kashmir Militants

BK0908160496 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 9 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The union home minister has said the government is ready for a dialogue with the militants in Jammu and Kashmir without any precondition. Mr. Indrajit Gupta has asked them to shun violence and return to the national mainstream. He was addressing a joint meeting of prominent citizens and representatives of political parties in Doda today.

Speaking at a Kashmiri migrants camp at Purthu near Jammu this afternoon, the home minister said that the gun culture of militants is responsible for the plight of the migrants. He urged the migrants to use their right of franchise. He said the state government and the center can find out solutions to their problems.

The National Conference leader and the former chief minister of Jammu and Kashmir, Dr. Farooq Abdullah, held two rounds of talks with the prime minister in New Delhi. According to the Janata Dal sources, the forthcoming assembly elections in the state and the possibility of an alliance between the Janata Dal and the National Conference were discussed.

India: Gujral Assures Bhutanese King of Continued Help

BK1108074996 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 10 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] India has pledged to continue its financial aid for Bhutan's eighth five-year plan. This was conveyed by the visiting external affairs minister, Mr. I.K. Gujral, when he called on the Bhutanese King Jigme Singye Wangchuck in Thimphu today.

India: DRDO Says 6-8 Tests Needed To Perfect Agni Missile

BK0908135396 Bombay THE TIMES OF INDIA in English 9 Aug 96 p 7

[Report by Dinesh Kumar]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) will need to conduct between six and eight tests of the Agni missile system before its accuracy can be perfected, according to defence scientists here.

DRDO scientists are hopeful that the government will accept their recent proposal to resume development flights of the Agni intermediate-range ballistic missile (IRBM).

Scientific adviser to the defence minister A P J Abdul Kalam has been quoted as saying that a proposal for resuming development flights of Agni has been submitted to the government.

Institute of Defence Studies and Analyses (IDSA) director Air Commodore (Retd) Jasjit Singh welcomed the move, saying "it is a positive sign if the government decides to carry out testing. We must carry out more tests (of Agni) more frequently and more adequately. "The point here is not that of induction, but the requirement for carrying out regular testing."

Defence ministry officials here see the Agni missile with its range of up to 2,500 km as an important deterrent against China which is viewed as a long-term threat to India.

Highlighting the country's threat perception from China, the 1994-95 defence ministry annual report says "it would be relevant for India to undertake the Agni project so as to acquire technology for future need, if required."

The DRDO officials say further tests are required to develop and test the accuracy of this system. The DRDO has till now carried out three tests of what is officially described as "re-entry technology demonstrator Agni." The first test was conducted on May 22, 1989 and the third and last so far on February 19, 1994. Both these tests were described as successful, while the second test had failed.

The total cost of this project so far has been a mere Rs [rupees] 55 crore which perhaps makes it one of the cheapest missile systems of its class.

On July 15, defence minister Mulayam Singh Yadav told Parliament that the Agni project had been completed.

"With three flight tests of re-entry technology demonstrator, the project Agni has been successfully completed. However, Agni is not a missile programme, he had told Lok Sabha in reply to an unstarred question.

The fifth report of the Defence Standing Committee, quotes then defence secretary K P Nambiar as saying that although Agni was a technology demonstration, "depending on the strategic environment the government may or may not decide to productionise it."

India: Article Says Nuclear Testing Not 'Essential' for Agni

BK0908144096 Delhi THE ASIAN AGE in English 9 Aug 96 pp 1, 4

[Article by Pravin Sawhney: "India May Ignore U.S., Build Agni"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] India proposes to build the Agni missile, and a single underground nuclear test to achieve a higher level of assurance for the missile warhead is not ruled out.

This is clear from Defence Research and Development Organisation [DRDO] chief A.P.J. Kalam's statement in Hyderabad on Wednesday [7 August] that a proposal for a few development flights of Agni was awaiting the government's clearance. "We are now free as we have refused to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty," he had added.

This has implications both for India and for the nuclear test ban treaty still being negotiated in Geneva. It is an indication that India may finally be gearing up to withstand US pressure over its missile programme, and that it might look for an opportunity to test a nuclear warhead for its missile.

Technically it was never in doubt that more test flights are necessary to make a credible Agni launch vehicle. The missile has had three successful test flights and has demonstrated India's expertise-in building complex ballistic missiles which leave the atmosphere before hitting a target

The Agni will need five to six development flights to attain a 95 per cent assurance level, and also to vindicate its performance parameters at a range of 2,500 km, obtain telemetry for databases and prove a more advanced separation process of the two stages of the missile. Once the government clears the DRDO [Defense Research Development Organization] proposal, the development flights and the actual production of the Agni Intermediate-Range Ballistic Missile can commence simultaneously. Dr. Kalam is apparently not happy with the assurance level of converting a free-fall nuclear bomb design into a warhead for missiles. India exploded its only nuclear device in 1971, which provided a proven design for a fission free-fall bomb. Ideally, a nuclear warhead for a missile needs an atmospheric test. As India lost this opportunity by signing the Partial Test Ban Treaty in 1963, which prohibits testing in the atmosphere, the only option was an underground test by simulating dynamic conditions which are more severe for a missile flight than a free-fall bomb.

Dr Kalam has expressed himself in favour of testing, although it is strictly not essential. India has the computer simulations expertise to make a missile warhead design which would be similar to that of a free fall bomb. The reason for seeking a proven dynamically tested nuclear missile warhead design is because Pakistan has a lead over India in this area. It is now well known that China gave its fourth fission weapon's atmospheric test design of its Dong Feng-2A missile armed with a nuclear warhead using Uranium 235 as fissile material to Pakistan.

Dr Kalam's proposal to go ahead with the manufacture of Agni missiles shows India's desire to give importance to its national security. For this, only a credible and visible long-range Agni delivery vehicle is needed, and not a nuclear warhead with a high level of assurance since India is not a declared nuclear nation.

India: Plans To 'Expedite' Missile Program Said Message to West

BK1008145296 Delhi THE HINDUSTAN TIMES in English 10 Aug 96 p 13

[Editorial: "Re-kindling Agni"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Defence Research and Development Organisation's (DRDO) communication to the Prime Minister on the development of the Agni missile will be widely welcomed. The DRDO could not have approached the Prime Minister had it not gathered enough assurance that its plea would be heard. The fact that the DRDO chief, Dr A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, himself broke the news to media persons in Hyderabad shows that India has made a conscious decision to expedite its missile development programme. By implication, it also suggests that India had indeed shelved the Agni project during the Rao regime after the third successful test — as US officials had been claiming and Rao spokesmen were denying. Dr Kalam has indicated that beginning next month three or four Agni tests would be carried out. Hopefully, after that and with the success achieved in re-entry and guidance technologies with the third test India would be close to bidding for entry into the international commercial market for satellite launching. Clearly, India's missile programme does not have only a commercial angle. The intermediate-range Agni missile, with a reach of 2500 kilometres, will have much of mainland China within its target. But the encouraging fact is that from the intermediate missile range to one spanning continents is not an endless quest. The perfection of Agni will boost India's morale.

Dr Kalam's revelation is also interesting for its timing. It is intended to carry a message to the Western nuclear powers and Russia, waiting at Geneva to outmanoeuvre India on the comprehensive test ban treaty (CTBT), that this country means to retain its sovereign decision on national security matters. It also wished to signal to China that India takes with a pinch of salt Beijing's protestations about support for the developing world and its readiness to strike a deal with the US to enjoy all the benefits of being a member of the exclusive nuclear club. Whether Dr Kalam was careless, or mentioned the Agni project deliberately in the context of the CTBT, he did the right thing by suggesting that the two are not unrelated. This should mean that India's nuclear option is finally getting ready to shed its ambiguity which no longer serves any diplomatic purpose.

India: Defense Minister Says Nag Missile Test Successful

BK1008134596 Madras THE HINDU in English 10 Aug 96 p 1

[Unattributed report]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The country yesterday acquired a new capability in firing guided missiles. Calling it the third greatest event in the history of indigenously developed missile systems, the Scientific Advisor to the Defence Minister Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, disclosed that the third generation anti-tank "Nag" missile flew successfully to the target at the Chandipur missile range in Orissa.

"The direct guided missile is a technological breakthrough. Self reliance in guidance area is very difficult when we have to develop the technology ourselves," Dr. Kalam later explained.

The leading light of India's missile development programme paid tributes to the consortium comprising academicians and the industry that developed the vital "seeker head" which leads the missile to the target. "It is the eye of the missile, enabling the missile to see where it is going," Dr. Kalam later elaborated. The noted scientist was here to receive the prestigious Gujar Mal Modi award for science.

Dr. Kalam felt success came along the prepared lines and the results were achieved due to careful selection of programmes. Dr. Kalam who is also the Secretary of the Department of Defence Research & Development said the earlier landmarks in the country's quest for developing missile systems was the injection of Rohini missile in space in 1980 and launch of Agni in 1989.

Speaking later, the External Affairs Minister, Mr. I.K. Gujral, said the country would be initiating policy responses against U.S. threat on the CTBT [Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty] issue in Geneva. Simultaneously a diplomatic initiative would also be launched. "CTBT is not a problem between just India and the U.S. It is part of multilateral discussions among a large number of countries where we are trying to project our point of view," he said.

Mr. Gujral felt it was unfortunate to see physical efforts being made to see that India does not achieve a breakthrough in technology. "Look at space. Efforts are on to ensure we do not get technology from outside." CTBT, he said was not merely about signing or not signing. The effort is to see that India should not get access to new technology and it remains a monopoly of the five permanent members of the UN's Security

Council. "The rest are sought to be bound hand and foot."

Paying tributes to Dr. Kalam and his team of scientists for attempting to extend the frontiers of science and technology in the country, the External Affairs Minister assured the gathering of senior defence personnel, scientists and industrialists that India has responded to the situation. "It would unfair to Gandhiji's memory if we surrender specially on the eve of 50th anniversary of Independence," he stated. Gujral made it clear that the Government would remain steadfast in its resolve of retaining the right to develop technology "as we wish to."

Earlier, both Dr. Kalam as well as Prof. M.G.K. Menon paid fulsome tributes to the trinity of Dr. Vikram Sarabhai, Dr Satish Dhawan and Dr. Baraham Prakash, regarded as the initiators and architects of the country's space programme.

"They put together the development of aerospace and research programme with a leadership which has enabled us to reach where we are," Prof. Menon said. However, he felt the country required leaders who will take political decisions to carry R & D [research and development] in frontier areas further.

India: Kashmir Governor Says Foreign Hostages Alive

BK1008150096 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1430 GMT 10 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Jammu and Kashmir governor, General K.V. Krishna Rao, has said there are reports that all four foreign tourists held captive by Al-Faran since July last year are alive and in good health. Quoting reports of villagers, Gen. Rao said all the four hostages were sighted in the (Sinthen Pass) in north Kishtwar area of Jammu region last week. In an interview with a television network, the governor said official agencies have been given reports from villagers about the hostages in different localities in south Kashmir and Doda District of Jammu region in the recent past.

India: Western Hostages Reportedly Sighted in Kashmir

BK1008111696 Hong Kong AFP in English 1110 GMT 10 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] NEW DELHI, Aug 10 (AFP) — Four Western tourists kidnapped by Moslem rebels in the Indian state of Kashmir more than a year ago have been sighted by villagers and appeared to be in good health, the state governor said Saturday [10 August].

The United News of India quoted Kashmir governor K.V. Krishna Rao as saying in the state summer capital Srinagar that villagers in the southern region of Jammu had reported seeing the hostages last week.

India: Kashmir Governor's Remarks on Foreign Hostages 'Misquoted'

BK1108101096 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 0830 GMT 11 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] An official spokesman in Srinagar has denied that the Jammu and Kashmir governor, General K.V. Krishna Rao, in an interview with a private TV network yesterday confirmed that the four foreign hostages are alive. He said the governor had categorically stated that all sorts of conflicting reports are being received by the government and one of these was that they were sighted in Pir Panjal mountain ranges by some villagers. But these reports have not been confirmed so far. The spokesman said that the governor has been misquoted.

Iran

Iran: Iranian, Turkish Ministers Discuss Expanding Relations

LD0908180696 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1630 GMT 9 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] At a meeting with Iran's minister of road and transport on 8 August, the Turkish energy minister stressed the need for expansion of relations between the two countries.

The Turkish energy minister also stressed the need to strengthen relations between Islamic countries and said that ties between Iran and Turkey were expanding on a daily basis.

Akbar Torkan, Iranian minister of roads and transport, also spoke about the suitable relations that exist between the two countries and said it was necessary for both sides to regulate a proper banking system and provide credit for exports.

He said the joint commission had agreed with the formation of four committees on transport, industry-mines, trade, and banking.

Iran: Turkish Prime Minister Erbakan Arrives on Official Visit

LD1008152796 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 1430 GMT 10 Aug 6

[FBIS Translated Text] Mr. Necmettin Erbakan, the prime minister of Turkey, arrived in Tehran this afternoon at the head of a senior delegation, for an official visit to our country. First Vice President Habibi welcomed the Turkish prime minister at Tehran's Mehrabad Airport.

After his arrival, Mr. Erbakan stressed that the government and people of Turkey attach a lot of importance to the maintenance of friendly and fraternal relations with the government and people of their Muslim and neighboring country, Iran. He added that he is very happy to be visiting Iran on his first foreign trip since becoming prime minister of Turkey.

Mr. Erbakan added: An important and new round of relations has begun between Iran and Turkey and the world will soon be a witness to the good cooperation between them in all fields, including those of oil, gas, energy, electricity, technology, and trade.

He reminded them: Iran and Turkey's cooperation will also contribute to the establishment of peace and tranquillity in the region. He stressed: Turkey will, under any circumstances, continue its good relations with Iran and this will not be to the detriment of any country whatsoever.

Our country's First Vice President Habibi, for his part, emphasized the importance of relations between the two neighboring countries of Iran and Turkey and considered that the greater strengthening of these relations is among the two countries' important objectives. He said: During this trip, emphasis will be placed on the need for the establishment of peace and tranquillity in the region and security of the two countries' borders.

Mr Habibi said: During Mr. Erbakan's trip to Tehran, the agreements reached between the two countries, within the framework of the joint economic commission, will be finalized.

Iran: Iranian Official—Turkey Finds No PKK Bases in Iran

NC1008173796 Paris AFP in English
1522 GMT 10 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] TEHRAN, Aug 10 (AFP) — A Turkish military mission has found no evidence that Iran is sheltering rebel Turkish-Kurdish separatists, Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister 'Alla'eddin Borujerdi said Saturday [10 August].

The two-day mission on Wednesday [7 August] and Thursday [8 August] scoured the Iranian side of their common border near the northwestern lake of Orumiyeh but found no proof of rebel bases belonging to the Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK), he told AFP.

A report sent to Ankara confirmed "there were no traces of PKK bases in Iran," Borujerdi said on the sidelines of a visit by pro-Islamic Turkish Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan.

The report had allowed preparations for Erbakan's visit to go ahead in a "good atmosphere," he added. Erbakan arrived Saturday [10 August] in Tehran, on his first foreign trip since becoming prime minister in June.

The Kurdish issue, which has regularly strained ties between the two neighbours and sparked clashes along their border, was swiftly raised by Erbakan when he arrived.

He called on the two countries to "wipe out the problem of terrorism in the region" while first Iranian Vice President Hasan Habibi called for "secure borders."

Previous Turkish governments have accused Iran and Syria of harbouring PKK rebels, who have waged a 12-year battle to establish a separate Kurdish homeland in southeast Anatolia.

Tehran in June accused Turkish forces of launching a cross-border raid inside Iran when it said two Turkish helicopters violated Iranian air space and fired rockets at a nomadic tribe, killing six people.

Shortly after Erbakan's arrival in power, Tehran announced that a joint military commission would hold an investigation into the incident.

Iran: Erbakan Expresses Desire To Expand Relations With Iran

TA1008174696 Ankara TRT Television Network
in Turkish 1500 GMT 10 Aug 96

[Mehmet Alkas report from Tehran]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] [Passage omitted] Turkish Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan, who arrived in Tehran on the first leg of his tour comprising Iran, Pakistan, Singapore, Malaysia, and Indonesia, and Iran's First Vice President Dr. Hasan Ebrahim Habibi held a news conference after conferring for some time at Tehran's Mehrabad Airport.

Erbakan expressed pleasure at conducting his first visit abroad to Iran after assuming the duties of prime minister and after having visited the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus. Erbakan said: As is known to all, Turkey and Iran are two brotherly neighboring Muslim countries. We are undertaking this visit in a bid to further our relations with Iran in all fields in mutual coordination. We are sure that our brother Iran is as much interested in this visit as we are. Our energy minister, who arrived in Tehran three days ago, has been conducting very important work as the head of the Iranian-Turkish joint economic committee. God willing, agreements that will define this coordination in all fields will be signed during this visit and a new period that expands the cooperation between us even more will be launched together with our Iranian counterparts. We are sure of this.

Extending his greetings and friendship to Iranian President Hashemi-Rafsanjani'; 'Ali Khamene'i, leader of the Islamic Revolution; and the Iranian people, Erbakan wished his visit to be auspicious.

In reply to a reporter's question, Erbakan said that efforts were exerted to maintain the relations with Iran on the best level and added that the relations with Iran will attain even more advanced levels from now on.

In reply to another reporter's question on Erbakan's views regarding external forces trying to hinder Turkish-Iranian relations from developing, Erbakan said: Our view is that the relations among all the world countries should develop. We seek to secure a new world order, where all the countries will respect each other, live in peace, and expand their relations. Erbakan stressed that all efforts will be exerted to install friendship and cooperation among the countries, and not tension.

In reply to a question on whether the visit will only be limited to the natural gas agreement, Erbakan said that the visit to Iran was undertaken in a bid to further the relations with Iran in all fields and added: We will work together with Iran to establish peace in the region and eradicate terrorism from the region in addition to taking up the issue of the natural gas agreement. Erbakan further explained that he will hold meetings on the issues of electricity and technology during his contacts.

Noting that the ECO [Economic Cooperation Organization] is an important factor for the Muslim countries in the region, Erbakan said: The relations in the Muslim world will develop in all fields and will not be limited to the heart only.

In reply to a question on his visit being against the United States, Erbakan said: This visit has nothing to do with being against the United States, which is both our friend and ally. We have undertaken this visit to further naturally our already existing relations with brotherly Iran. In no way does this visit qualify as being against the United States, which is our friend and ally. [passage omitted]

Iran: Turkish Prime Minister Erbakan Comments on Relations

LD1008194596 Tehran IRIB Television Third Program Network in English 1815 GMT 10 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Turkish Premier Mr. Necmettin Erbakan arrived in Tehran this afternoon, heading a high-ranking delegation, for an official visit. First Vice President Mr. Hasan Habibi formally welcomed the Turkish premier upon his arrival at Mehrabad Airport.

Later Mr. Erbakan took part in a press conference with correspondents from different countries. My colleague was there and talked to Mr. Erbakan.

[Begin recording] [Unidentified correspondent] Your Excellency, I represent the IRIB English news. This interview will also be transmitted to Asia Vision and also CNN.

Your Excellency, Iran and Turkey have had their ups and downs in their relations. How do you assess the future relations in your term of office?

[Erbakan, in Turkish with superimposed translation into English] I thank you for your question. I answered your question to some extent at the beginning of my comments. But now, here, I repeat it again, that Turkey has always tried to maintain its ties with Iran at the best possible level. However, from now on, Turkey will further promote its relations with Iran.

[Correspondent] The second question was somehow related to the first question. You've been asked not to promote ties with Iran — regarding some foreign states — now, would it have any effects on your ideas in relationship with Iran.

[Erbakan] Turkey believes that Tehran-Ankara relations must be (?boiled downed) and that they must establish a new type of cooperation in the world. Turkey respects the entire world and calls for peace and widening of ties through [as heard] the globe. We are now in Iran, following which we will travel to other foreign countries, and then we will have trips to Western states. Turkey is seeking relations devoid of tension and full of peace and fraternity.

[Correspondent] Mr. Prime Minister, is the purchase of gas the sole reason for your trip to Iran, or would you cover any other agreements or protocols?

[Erbakan] No, we are to discuss with Iranian officials various fields, including gas. Issues such as electricity, technology, regional peace, as well as ridding the region of terroristic events; also, cover other topics on the two sides' cooperation. We will demonstrate such cooperation to the world.

[Correspondent] One last question Mr. Prime Minister. How do you assess the future of Irano-Turkish relations in the Islamic world and the regional states?

[Erbakan] As you know, Turkey, Iran, Pakistan, and Central Asian states formed the ECO [Economic Cooperation Organization], which is a very significant organization. ECO is not a newly established organization — it long ago began its activities. The ECO is of a high importance for the world of Islam. Iran and Turkey, as two Islamic states, should increase their cooperation in all fields, such as trade and so on. [end recording]

Iran: Habibi, Turkey's Erbakan Discuss Cooperation in Talks

LD1008211296 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1930 GMT 10 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] In its relations with Iran, Turkey wishes to set an example of model cooperation in the world of Islam. First Vice President Hasan Habibi and Turkish Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan began their first round of official bilateral talks today after a private meeting.

At this round of talks, Erbakan said: Iran and Turkey are two brother, Muslim countries, and I am very pleased that my first trip abroad as prime minister of Turkey is to Iran. The Turkish prime minister said that one of the special characteristics of his visit was the large size of the Turkish delegation, and he added: The people of Turkey and the country's press leaders are very interested in the expansion of cooperation between Iran and Turkey, and the political will existing in the two countries can be seen as very positive for the expansion of relations.

Erbakan spoke of Islam as the important factor behind the strong link between the two nations of Iran and Turkey, and said: The borders of the two countries have always been peaceful and secure throughout many years. He added: The volume of trade between the two countries had reached more than $2 billion per year in previous years. Unfortunately, this has decreased now, and — in view of the fact that the populations of the two countries are Muslims, and in view of their geographic position and their extensive natural resources and potential — Iran and Turkey must rapidly increase the level of bilateral commercial cooperation.

The prime minister of Turkey said: We believe that, in the new era of cooperation with Iran, we can lay the foundations for model relations in the world of Islam in terms of bilateral, regional, and international ties. Erbakan said that the main aim of his visit to Iran is to lay the foundations for the expansion of ties and an increase in friendly relations between Iran and Turkey.

Regarding the purchase of Iranian gas, Erbakan said: Turkey will sign the agreement for the purchase of gas from Iran during this visit. He also declared his country's willingness to purchase crude oil from Iran up to a ceiling of 5 million barrels and purchase electrical energy from our country.

The prime minister of Turkey stressed the importance of the establishment of the bank of the Economic Cooperation Organization [ECO] for the benefit of Islamic countries; the establishment of an Islamic development bank and a common Islamic market; and strengthening cooperation between ECO and the Association of South-East Asian Nations. He also noted that Islamic countries must, by strengthening defense cooperation, pave the way for meeting one another's requirements in this sector.

Erbakan stressed: Turkey wishes to have joint economic cooperation with Iran in Central Asia and the Caucasus, free of rivalry.

Habibi, for his part, described the visit of the Turkish prime minister to Iran as important in terms of the expansion of political, cultural, economic, and parliamentary cooperation, as well as security, regional, and extra-regional cooperation; and he said: Turkey and Iran have consistently benefitted from good and friendly political, economic, and commercial cooperation, and efforts must be made to expand relations even further and raise the volume of commercial exchanges between the two countries to a high and desirable level.

The first vice president described the role of economic cooperation between the two countries as important in the consolidation of bilateral ties, and he noted the need for good planning to allow a better exploitation of joint capabilities and resources. He described the powerful presence of Iran and Turkey, as two partners, in Central Asia and the Caucasus as a basis of preventing the interference of foreigners in these regions and promoting growth and development.

Habibi said: We believe that the two countries' borders must be borders of peace, friendship, and fraternity, and we openly state that the Islamic Republic of Iran will not allow any group to disrupt Turkey's border security via Iran, and we expect the same from Turkey in exchange.

The first vice president described the expansion of relations between the parliaments of the two countries as beneficial for greater closeness between Iran and Turkey, and said: The expansion of university links, establishing a chair for Persian and Turkish language in the two countries, increasing tourist activities, and increasing joint press cooperation can be ways of consolidating ties between two neighboring Muslim countries.

Habibi referred to the political and economic importance of Central Asia and the Caucasus, and said: Instability and disputes in the region are not to anyone's advantage; peace and stability must be consolidated there. He expressed the hope that, with the withdrawal of Armenian forces from the Karabakh region, the crisis in the region will come to an end.

The first vice president said in conclusion: At a time when the enemies of Islamic countries have adopted a hostile stance against Muslims, we must pursue strengthening Islamic and regional cooperation with greater seriousness in order to confront these enemies.

Iran: Visiting Turkish Premier Lauds Expansion of Relations

LD1108115396 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 0930 GMT 11 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Turkish Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan met and conferred with President ['Ali Akbar] Hashemi-Rafsanjani today.

Erbakan thanked the Islamic Republic of Iran for its warm hospitality saying: The expansion of relations with the fraternal and neighboring country, Iran, is very important for Turkey.

Erbakan considered that good-neighborliness and peaceful coexistence between the peoples of Turkey and Iran over many years was a source of pride for the two countries. He said: Under the auspices of cooperation and understanding Turkey and Iran, as two major countries, can lay the foundations for strong and sincere relations between them in the region.

The Turkish prime minster referred to his country's political resolve to expand political, cultural, and economic and trade relations with Iran. He said: Turkey will not permit any third country to interfere in the growing trend of cooperation between Turkey and Iran. He added: Despite certain opposition, Turkey is determined to increase its cooperation with Iran and to purchase oil, gas, and electricity from that country.

Erbakan stressed the good technical and technological progress made by Iran and Turkey in recent years and considered that existing technical and industrial resources in the two countries were complementary. He said: Islamic countries and the Middle East and Asian regions have a lot of talent and ability to secure their own technical and industrial needs and they should, by strengthening regional cooperation, prepare the ground all the more for the possibility of breaking dependencies on foreign countries and for making appropriate use of existing resources in the region, in the interest of the regional nations. The Turkish prime minster considered that maintaining and strengthening security and tranquillity on the shared borders of the two countries was important for the expansion of political and economic cooperation.

He said: Turkey will not allow any individuals or groups to be politically active against Iran in Turkey.

He stressed the need for greater cooperation between the two countries' armed forces to strengthen security and tranquillity on their shared borders.

At the meeting, President Rafsanjani thanked the Turkish prime minister for coming to Iran on his first foreign visit [since coming to power] and said: The deep religious, historical and cultural bonds between the two nations of Iran and Turkey bind the two nations together.

President Rafsanjani considered the safeguarding and strengthening of border security and tranquillity along the two countries' joint borders to be commensurate with the interests of the Iranian and Turkish nations and added: Iran has demonstrated its political and military will in confronting those who disrupt the peace and security of the two countries' joint borders and will not allow any group to disrupt the order and security of the Turkish borders through Iran.

Rafsanjani considered increased trust and confidence, independence of thought, and actions according to the interests of the two Muslim nations of Iran and Turkey to be a proper basis for expanding cooperation and bilateral relations. He said: Some elements and propaganda centres do not wish the two neighboring countries' relations to be expanded and strengthened and, through malicious suggestions and interpretations, try to mar the sincere and fraternal relations between the two countries. He stressed: The officials of the two countries must, through understanding and farsightedness, reveal the nature of such elements and neutralize their malicious objectives.

President Rafsanjani considered Iran's and Turkey's technical and industrial resources to be complementary to each other and said: The two countries' cordial cooperation and reciprocal use of each other's technical and industrial resources, besides helping with the growth and flourishing of regional and Central Asian states and the Caucasus, will block the way to foreign interference in the region and reduce the high prices quoted by foreign firms and contractors.

Rafsanjani referred to the positive basis for the development of the two countries' cooperation within the framework of ECO [Economic Cooperation Organization], and said: With the reduction of tariffs; the creation of customs facilities; the setting up of insurance, the ECO, and Islamic Banks; establishing sea and air lines; and the actual implementation of earlier ECO decisions, we will be able to create a flourishing market for the region and the Islamic states.

Iran: Velayati, Turkey's Erbakan Discuss Cooperation

LD1108121396 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 0930 GMT 11 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Turkish Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan, in a meeting this morning with Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati, said the start of the new head of the Turkish Government's foreign visits, which began in Iran, signified his interest in strengthening relations between the two Muslim nations and the importance that Turkey accords Iran. He thanked our country's officials for their warm welcome.

In this meeting, Erbakan stressed his country's preparedness to expand its cooperation and strengthen its relations with Iran in various fields. Explaining the objectives of the Islamic Turkish Government as improving its domestic economic situation and, in its foreign policy, regulating relations based on Islamic solidarity, he described his visit to Iran as a foundation stone for relations based on Islamic unity.

Foreign Minister Velayati, expressing his pleasure with Erbakan's visit to Tehran, declared the Islamic Republic of Iran's preparedness to increase trade exchange and political, economic, and security cooperation in the two countries' bilateral and regional relations.

Velayati declared cooperation in further activating the Economic Cooperation Organization; continuation of the tripartite meetings of Syria, Turkey, and Iran for safeguarding Iraq's territorial integrity; and cooperation by the two important Asian countries in Central Asia and the Caucasus to be in line with the interests of the Turkish and Iranian nations.

At this meeting, attended also by the deputy foreign ministers of Iran and Turkey, it was decided to put the finding of practical ways of strengthening cooperation in all fields on their mutual agenda.

Iran: Rowhani, Turkish Deputies Urge Security, Other Cooperation

LD1108123596 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 0930 GMT 11 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] A number of parliamentary deputies from Turkey, who are accompanying Prime Minister Erbakan on a visit to Tehran, today met and conferred with Deputy Majles Speaker Rowhani.

Mr. Rowhani announced that the Islamic Republic of Iran's Majles is prepared to organize the interparliamentary conference of Economic Cooperation Organization [ECO] member countries. He added that strengthening the ECO would transform it into a suitable framework for expanding regional cooperation.

Mr. Rowhani also spoke of the U.S. Congress's latest legislation against Iran and Libya, stressing that D'Amato's legislation is a great insult to all the world's nations and a violation of the independence of all countries. He thinks the unified international reaction to this dictatorial move is the international community's natural and decisive response to America.

For their part, the Turkish parliamentary deputies noted U.S. pressures on Turkey to cancel their visit to Iran, and said the fact that this trip is taking place shows that relations between the two countries are strong. They also expressed the hope that economic, cultural, political, and security cooperation between Tehran and Ankara will reach the highest levels possible under the term of office of Turkey's new government.

At the meeting, one of the Turkish parliamentary deputies said that his country is prepared to cooperate with the Islamic Republic of Iran in the fields of security and fighting terrorism. He added that no-one in Turkey wants the presence of foreigners in the region, and he called for greater cooperation between the two parliaments to promote bilateral relations.

Iran: Erbakan—Iran To Partake in All Turkish Decisions on Terrorism

TA1208080096 Ankara TRT Television Network in Turkish 2100 GMT 11 Aug 96

[Mehmet Alkas report from Tehran]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Turkish Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan has stated that Iran said that it will participate in all decisions Turkey makes in a bid to eradicate terrorism from the region. Answering reporters' questions prior to the dinner hosted in his honor by Turkey's Ambassador to Iran Mithat Balkan, Erbakan said that the Turkish delegation was received very warmly in Iran.

Explaining that the Iranian officials told him that they did not support terrorism and that they faced a similar situation regarding terrorism as that of Turkey, Erbakan noted: The Iranian officials told me that they are ready to participate in whatever decision we make, including launching a military operation, in order to save the whole of the Middle East, including Syria, from terrorism and establish a region of peace. Is it possible to ask for more?

In reply to a question, Erbakan said that the Syrian officials told him that the leader of the terrorist organization was not a permanent resident of their country and that he was constantly changing countries because he lived in perpetual fear. Erbakan added: Moreover, the Syrian side told me that they have documents to prove that this person is actually in Turkey.

Expressing his belief that Iran had a sincere approach to the issue of stopping terrorism, Erbakan added: However, there is a mountainous corner area which is shared by Turkey, Iran, and Iraq. It is impossible to determine from where the terrorist is coming and where he is going in this region. For that reason, Turkey may sometimes cross over into the other side from that mountainous region. Iran is telling us that they are ready to do whatever it takes to prevent this. They are actually telling us: We will do whatever you tell us. They are open to everything. We will conduct an assessment of all these issues when we return to Turkey.

In reply to another question, Erbakan said that the Iraqi oil pipeline will reopen shortly and added that $2 billion worth of oil will flow through this oil pipeline. Explaining that $1 billion of this amount belonged to Iraq and that the other $1 billion would be retained by the United Nations as war reparations, Erbakan expressed the hope that a large amount of this money would be spent to purchase humanitarian supplies from Turkey. Erbakan further stressed that southeast Anatolia would be revived with the reopening of the oil pipeline.

Answering another question, Erbakan said that all kinds of promises were made regarding Poised Hammer in a bid to have Article 50 take effect and added: The mandate of Poised Hammer was extended under these conditions. We have been made certain promises. The U.S. vice president himself told us that he will extend every kind of support to us at the United Nations on this issue. Britain and France have also made promises to us.

Iran, Turkey Sign 'Significant' Gas Supply Agreement

LD1208074896 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0730 GMT 12 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Iran and Turkey finalized an agreement for the selling of 190 billion cubic meters of natural gas from Iran to Turkey. The agreement was signed by the two countries' officials in Tehran today.

According to the agreement, from 1999, when the implementation of the contract begins, Iran will begin exporting 3 billion cubic meters of gas to Turkey. This amount will rise to 10 billion cubic meters by 2005. Political experts describe the signing of the agreement as a great and significant development in relations between the two fraternal and neighboring countries of Iran and Turkey.

Iran: Daily Lauds Signing of Gas Agreement With Turkey

LD1208100796 Tehran IRNA in English 0905 GMT 12 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran, Aug 12, IRNA — The daily IRAN NEWS on Monday [12 August] lauded the historic deal between Tehran and Ankara for the export of Iranian gas to Turkey, saying that natural gas would play a significant role in promoting the economies of Asia and Europe.

Noting that the dlrs. 20 billion agreement would result in extensive monetary gains for both Iran and Turkey, it also stressed that Iran, with its cheaper gas and favorable geographical location, is quite capable of supplying the best and cleanest energy in Asia and Europe.

"Export of natural gas is one of the major factors in the development of the economy," the editorial wrote, adding the gas pipeline could also serve as a means of easing political tension and would make it more difficult for those who have ill designs to succeed in their divisive plots.

Reminding that the hostility of the U.S. towards Irano-Turkish economic ties calls for the relations of Tehran and Ankara to be based on firm and sound grounds, the article concluded by underlining, "the 'friendship pipeline' will block the way of hostile foreign influence and will allow the two countries to enjoy proper and friendly relations for generations to come."

Iran: Israelis Warn of Tehran's Biological Arsenal

LD1108143596 London THE SUNDAY TIMES in English 11 Aug 96 p 14

[Article by Uzi Mahnaimi in Tel Aviv and James Adams in Washington: "Iran Builds Biological Arsenal: Israelis Warn of Tehran Plan To Poison Europe's Water Supplies"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] IRAN has acquired an arsenal of biological weapons for terrorist use and is prepared to use them, according to intelligence sources in America and Israel.

Washington's confirmation of the long-feared Iranian development came in a report sent recently to the Senate intelligence committee, which acknowledges for the first time that Iran not only has biological weapons, but also the means to deliver them. "We believe Iran holds some stocks of biological agents and weapons," said the report.

"Tehran most likely has investigated both toxins and live organisms as BW (biological weapons) agents," it concluded. "Iran has the technical infrastructure to support a significant BW programme with little foreign assistance."

Israeli sources say the Iranians keep stocks of anthrax and botulism in Tabriz, northwest of Iran, and can produce more stocks quickly. Both the CIA and the Israelis believe that military scientists working for the Islamic regime in Tehran have developed a deadly BW aerosol that can be carried by a terrorist. Although they will not be able to put biological weapons on long-rang ballistic missiles before the end of the decade, they can deliver them with Scud missiles, according to Israeli sources, and they have a system for dropping them from Soviet-era Sukhoi attack aircraft.

The Israelis are so convinced of the threat that — while passing on to America a report linking Iran to the crash of TWA Flight 800 last month — they have warned Washington not to retaliate for fear of provoking an Iranian biological terror campaign endangering thousands of lives.

Israel's defence minister warned the CIA last week that if Iran were hit badly "it would respond with a terrible escalation of terror, including the poisoning of water resources in Western Europe and America with a biological pollutant". According to one senior Israel intelligence officer, Tel Aviv has also warned the United States to expect more terrorist attacks before the American presidential election in November.

While agreeing with the Israeli assessment of Iran's BW programme, some American defence officials are treating aspects of treating Israeli reports about involvement in the TWA crash with scepticism — particularly information from an agent in Tehran who reported that after the crash, senior officials in the Iranian capital were "cheering and celebrating, saying, 'This time we really screwed them.'"

Despite interviewing thousands of people, reviewing telephone intercepts and re-examining satellite photographs, neither the CIA nor the FBI has any suspects in the downing of TWA 800.

There is, however, general agreement that it was a bomb that blew the aircraft apart and American intelligence is working on the assumption that Tehran was involved. "Their fingerprints are all over it but so far we do not have the hard evidence," said one source within the CIA. The Americans suspect Tehran was behind a wide range of recent attacks, including the bombing of an American military base in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, in June, when 19 servicemen were killed. The investigation into the Dhahran bombing should be completed by the Saudis in the next few weeks. William Perry, the defence secretary, has said that the investigators believe there is an international dimension to the attack and that Iran is "possibly" involved.

Evidence for this belief hinges on the fragment of a detonator that was recovered from the bomb site. Forensic experts say it is similar to others used by Hezbollah terrorists who are based in Lebanon but are armed and financed by Iran. Perry has warned that there will be retaliation if evidence is found of Iran's involvement in this attack, the downing of TWA 800 or any other raid that costs American lives.

In the past few days America has stepped up its surveillance of Iran and has moved satellites to improve coverage of the area. Last week, reconnaissance aircraft flew over several of the likely targets for any American attack and the pictures are being analysed in Washington. But the dilemma confronting President Bill Clinton is simple: American fire power can destroy Iran's ability to fight a conventional war, but its support for terrorism could continue even if the country were left with no tanks, missiles or nuclear facilities.

A range of "target packages" is being prepared and the Pentagon is examining the options, which would most likely include an attack by Tomahawk cruise missiles from navy ships in the Indian Ocean or the Gulf.

The CIA has identified 11 terrorist training camps inside Iran that would head the target list. Other likely targets are CSS-2 surface-to-surface missiles kept in tunnels overlooking the strategic Strait of Hormuz — through which much of the Gulf oil is exported.

The CIA believes that Iran is determined to overthrow any Middle Eastern government that does not toe its line. "We will be challenged over time by a hegemonistic Iran which will seek to dominate the region," said one CIA report.

Iran has become the principal bogeyman for the Clinton administration and is blamed for the upsurge in terrorism against American targets as well as the growth in instability in countries from Algeria to Bahrain. The administration believes the terror network is controlled by Sayed Ali Khamanei, the 60-year-old supreme religious leader.

Over the past eight years Iran has invested about $40 billion (26 billion pounds Sterling) in rebuilding its armed forces, shattered by the eight-year war with Iraq that ended in 1988. But as the economy has collapsed, money has grown tighter and last year Iran spent only $250 million on arms — the lowest sum for 10 years.

Despite this huge investment, the Iranian military remains in poor shape and will be no match for any American attack. Command and control is poor, the air force is ageing both in men and material and the air defence system is full of holes, which means that America would be able to attack with virtual impunity.

As a result, the CIA believes that the Tehran regime is uniquely vulnerable to precision attacks that could permanently cripple its military industrial infrastructure. "We know that they would find it tough to rebuild," said a Pentagon source. "They're short of money and just about everything else they would need. Whatever we do will have a significant long-term impact."

Some Pentagon planners would also like to strike the country's nuclear weapons facility that lies 25 miles north of Tehran in the Argoz Mountains. Although Iran is believed to be at least four years away from developing a nuclear device, such an attack would provide a perfect opportunity to kill the weapons programme before it develops any further. But the facility is buried deep underground and is invulnerable to any conventional weapons in America's armoury.

Iran: U.S. Should Present Evidence for Accusations Or 'Shut Up'

LD1008094496 Tehran IRAN NEWS in English 4 Aug 96 p 2

[Unattributed Editorial: "Put Up Or Shut Up"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Once more Iran is the target of fabricated allegations and intimidation. This phenomenon began from the very first day of the triumph of the Islamic Revolution in 1979, but received momentum when an inexperienced and vulnerable president entered the White House.

Time and again in this column, we presented the facts about Iran. We, and the other media representatives in Iran, did succeed in convincing the public opinion both on national and international levels that the government of the Islamic Republic neither believes in nor sponsors terrorism.

It was because of the Iranian Foreign Minister's prompt action and Iranian media's mature stance that the U.S. trade measures against Tehran backfired and left Washington isolated even among its allies.

The U.S. has failed in its incessant attacks against Iran because of two clear reasons. First the U.S. has lost its credibility as an honest broker and impartial player in international or regional issues.

Israel's impertinence, deviousness, and deceitful behaviour proved to the Palestinians and other Arab nations during the last 50 years, and more recently during the last few months, together with U.S. support of Zionists' oppressive policies, clearly indicate Washington's double-standards.

The second reason why the U.S. is isolated even among its own allies is that the U.S. accusations against Iran were hollow with no evidence whatsoever to back them up. Even the senior officials from Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy and Ireland expressed their abhorrence over the baseless U.S. accusations against Iran.

Commenting on who could be involved in the June 25 bombing in Saudi Arabia, Defense Secretary William Perry on Friday [9 August] said, 'possibly Iran.' It is really surprising that a high official of a country which claims to be a superpower points the finger at Iran accusing it of terrorism and then qualifies the baseless accusation with a note of 'possibly!'

The best response to the U.S. rhetoric is 'shut up or put up.' We are asking the U.S. to shut up because enough is enough. As Iranians, we are also very much interested in knowing if our country operates 'terrorist camps.' Iran is an open country and our authentic and accurate information is that no such camps exist in Iran. If the U.S. can present documentation in support of its accusations, it should do so or shut up.

As far as the American military adventurism against Iran is concerned, such a move will not be the first and of course not the last. U.S. and its satellites fought a proxy war against the newly-born Islamic Republic during the 1980-88 Iraqi-imposed war.

No one knows better than the United States the might of the Islamic combatants. If they have forgotten, we would like to remind them that each and every Iranian knows how to defend every inch of his or her motherland.

Iran: Iran 'Must Act Now' Against U.S. 'Anti-Iran Campaign'

LD1008111896 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 4 Aug 96 p 2

[Unattributed Editorial: "U.S. Anti-Iran Campaign Critical: Foreign Ministry Should Not Sit Idly By"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Having received crushing rebuffs from EU members and other countries in its anti-Iran campaign, the U.S. has launched a new wave of propaganda campaign against the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Under extreme pressure to win in this year's election, doves and hawks in U.S. politics spare no effort to outsmart each other even at the cost of trampling on human norms and values.

Under the influence of the strong Zionist lobby, both Republicans and Democrats have seized on the Iranian card in last minute hopes to influence the results of the coming elections. It is no wonder Newt Gingrich accuses Iran of involvement in the crash of the TWA plane, William Perry prematurely charges Iran of involvement in the June 25 bombing in Saudi Arabia before the results of investigations are completed, and the U.S. media unleash a disinformation war consisting of trash which Iranian terrorists-turned opposition politicians-harbored and financed by the U.S.-feed them.

The accusation that Iran sponsors terrorism is no longer new. Everybody knows that Iran has always been a scapegoat and a convenient target. Likewise, the baseless charges of Iran striving to build nuclear weapons is not new. The accusers themselves know that Iran's nuclear program is under the supervision of the International Atomic Energy Agency and that the U.S. and Zionist circles have so far not been able to come up with even a single document proving their charges.

Instead of pointing fingers, the U.S. would do better to concentrate on setting its home in order by turning to ways to solve its domestic problems and by asking its allies, like Saudi Arabia, to give popular political participation a chance in that country in order to dissipate acts of violence.

Similarly in order to capture that elusive peace for the Middle East, the U.S. should ask Israel to return the occupied territories to the Arabs, implement UN resolutions, allow all Palestinians to return to the homes, and hold a referendum to set up a popular government in free and fair elections.

Since a small group of Zionists who control the media and the key position in the United States, have taken the whole American nation mortgage, almost all U.S. international moves are influenced by this sectarian group with a parochial objective. As a result the U.S. politicians have failed to overcome problems at home and abroad. Hence, the need for a scapegoat.

U.S. politicians are actually hard-hit for a way out of their domestic pressures. Although the U.S. disinformation campaign is one-sided because of the control which the U.S. exerts over world media networks. It seems our foreign policy-makers remain coy in this regard.

The Foreign Ministry should act now from two standpoints: First, given the fact that U.S. politicians are openly speaking of a military attack on Iran, it is the national duty of our Foreign Ministry to lodge a complaint against the U.S. with the Permanent Court of International Justice at The Hague. This will prevent U.S. rumour-mongering and prepare the world to beware of U.S. lies, particularly its desire to see the world under its feet. Secondly, the Foreign Ministry should take the initiative of asking for a special session of the OIC and NAM on terrorism to redefine the concept. The charge of terrorism should not be linked forever with Iran, Libya, North Korea or Sudan. The last step would be for Tehran to take up the matter with the UN for implementation.

Iran must not just sit and listen to the monotonous accusations of being a terrorist country. It must act now.

Iran: U.S. Terrorists Enjoy Moral Support From Congress

LD1008122996 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 0946 GMT 10 Aug 96

[Unattributed commentary]

[FBIS Translated Text] U.S. officials announced that about two tonnes of explosives have been stolen from a chemical warehouse in Western Virginia. According to U.S. military experts, the explosives are very destructive and of the kind that were used in the bombing incident in Oklahoma last year. That is why the theft of the explosives and chemicals can be connected to last year's explosion. At the same time, it shows the connection between U.S. paramilitary and terrorist groups and that country's senior security and military officials that facilitates such groups' access to explosive materials.

It may be that such a connection has not been uninfluential in the opposition by some U.S. Congress members to the anti-terrorism legislation passed last week. That is because one of the articles of the legislation allows security officials to use special chemicals to trace the manufactures of such chemicals. This article was not adopted because of the opposition of some Congress members and their affiliation to explosive-manufacturing firms and factories. That by itself demonstrates the dishonesty of U.S. politicians and legislators in the campaign against terrorism and shows that in adopting the bills that impose sanctions against foreign countries and firms on the pretext of fighting against terrorism, they vote unanimously, but when the domestic roots of terrorist incidents become clear and specific, then their opposition prevents the adoption of stringent laws against terrorism.

It may be that the most important factor that connects these terrorist groups with some of the U.S. representatives and senators is their opposition to the scope of operation by the Federal Government since from the beginning of the explosion incidents, such as Oklahoma, the finger of accusation was pointed towards the conservatives in the Congress. At that time, the new right, headed by Newt Gingrich, the current Speaker of the House of Representatives, were accused of making paramilitary groups in various U.S. states embark on such activities by their allegations and propaganda against the central government. This issue, besides showing the domestic roots of terrorism and their security and military connections, shows that such groups at least enjoy moral and political support from some U.S. statesmen and legislators.

Iran: Ayatollah Amini—U.S. 'Hostilities' Will 'Unify' Iran

LD1008161896 Tehran IRNA in English 0736 GMT 10 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Qom, Aug. 10, IRNA — The substitute Friday congregational prayer leader of this holy city, Ayatollah Ebrahim Amini, said that the U.S. by pressing other countries which have economic relations with Iran is violating the international laws.

The latest move of Washington should by regarded as an offensive act, he told the congregation.

Further in his sermon, Ayatollah Amini said that American statesmen by raising baseless and false allegations against Islam and the Islamic Republic take undeliberated measures, which like those in the past, will certainly have no effect on Iran.

The Islamic Republic of Iran is strong enough not to be affected by the U.S. hostile attitude, he added.

He noted that the recent hostilities of Washington towards Tehran will further unify the Iranian nation.

Iran: South African Diplomat Rejects U.S. Sanctions

LD1108164196 Tehran IRNA in English 0758 GMT 11 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Rasht, Gilan Prov., Aug. 11, IRNA — South African Ambassador to Tehran Moosa Mohamed Moolla [name as received] in a meeting with Gilan's Governor General 'Ali Akbar Taha'i here Saturday [10 August] said that his country is planning to expand ties with the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Speaking to IRNA, he added that South Africa, like Iran, is an independent state and believes that the recent U.S. law, calling for sanctions on Iran, which has faced worldwide opposition, has no foundation and is against the principles of international trade.

The ambassador also announced his country's readiness to declare sistership between Iran's Caspian Sea port of Anzali and the South African port of Durban.

Mohamed Moolla added that a group of South African businessmen are to visit Iran soon to hold negotiations with the Iranian officials on investment in the Islamic Republic.

Iran: Lawsuit Against U.S. to Hague Tribunal

LD1208113696 Tehran IRIB Television First Program Network in Persian 0930 GMT 12 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Foreign Minister 'Ali Akbar Velayati announced last week that Iran would take the United States to the international court for violating international regulations. The Foreign Ministry's spokesman declared today: The Islamic Republic of Iran's lawsuit against the United States will be submitted by the deputy foreign minister in charge of legal and international affairs to the Iran-United States arbitration court in The Hague.

Iran Could Be 'Strategic Ally' For Europe

LD1008102696 Tehran IRAN NEWS in English 6 Aug 96 p 2

[Unattributed Editorial: "European Reaction is Welcome"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] As expected, U.S. President Bill Clinton yesterday signed a controversial bill into law which will impose penalties on foreign companies investing in Iranian and Libyan oil and gas sectors.

Clinton, despite the opposition of his country's allies in Europe, went ahead and signed the bill which history will record as one of the most illogical and irresponsible actions taken by a U.S.President.

But it seams that things are not as simple as they appear. So, what is the truth? We have to consider the global facts of life and the new international reality which has come to pass since the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991.

The real reason why the second Persian Gulf war was fought will divulge many bitter facts related to the hostile U.S. stance against Iran.

The U.S. which was fully aware of Iraqi President Saddam Husayn's political and psychological quirks, encouraged him to cross the border into tiny Kuwait. Why?

The simple answer is that the U.S. wanted to have total domination over the politically and economically strategic region of the Persian Gulf.

Iraq, after its defeat in the first Persian Gulf war, had neither the economic wherewithal nor the military might to be a real threat to any country in the region and would not have contemplated invading Kuwait had it not been for the U.S. green light and encouragement to do so.

As far as an Iranian threat to the region is concerned, history shows that this nation has no record of attacking any of its neighbours in this centry. Before they set up military bases in the region, Americans tried to create a monster of Iran for the regional countries and succeeded in preparing grounds for their own presence in the Persian Gulf.

The fact is, however, that the Islamic Republic was, in those days, and still is busy with rebuilding the country after a 8-year Iraqi-imposed war.

On the pretext of an Iranian threat, the Americans wanted to fill a power vacuum in the world and in this region which followed the collapse of the Soviet Union. The Americans knew very well that Europe would be the only hurdle in their way of fulfilling their dreams of having sole domination in the Persian Gulf region.

We have seen that after the second Persian Gulf war, the Americans achieved their domination and European influence began to wane in the UAE [United Arab Emirates], Bahrain, Oman and Kuwait, on the southern side of the vital waterway.

Still, Europe could establish relations with Iran as a strategic ally which owns the entire northern side of the Persian Gulf. A factor which was, and is, hard to digest for the Americans who still entertain the far fetched notion of regaining their lost influence in Iran.

Only two years ago, in 1994, United States was the largest purchaser of Iranian oil and was also Iran's biggest trade partner earlier in the 1990s. Of course the Islamic republic will never allow the U.S. to have an advantage over this country.

Europe's reaction to the American sanctions against Iran is welcomed in Tehran. Iran, now expects more speedy constructive dialogue with Europe to promote further healthy politico-economic ties with all the members of the European Union.

Iran: Official Denies Iraqi Oil Being Smuggled Through Iran

LD1008073596 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 0330 GMT 10 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Dr Kamal Kharrazi, Iran's permanent representative at the United Nations, on Friday [9 August] denied that Iraqi oil is being smuggled through Iranian waters with the knowledge of the Iranian Government. The claim is a part of a U.S. propaganda program against Tehran, he said.

Kharrazi said: The claim by the Clinton administration, initially raised in a letter to the head of the UN Security Council's Iraq Sanctions Committee, lacks logic and acceptable documents, and is baseless, much like other U.S. claims against the Islamic Republic.

At a meeting of the Sanctions Committee on Thursday [8 August], the U.S. representative referred to a letter which had been handed to Committee Chairman Tono Eitol, claiming that vessels loaded with Iraqi oil are using Iranian territorial waters in order to evade the multinational interception force stationed in the Persian Gulf.

Kharrazi denied that Iran is violating UN regulations on economic sanctions against Iraq and pointed out that the Islamic Republic has increased its coastal patrols in the Arvand Rud waterway and other coastal border areas in order to facilitate and supervise the proper implementation of the sanctions.

Iran: Iranian UN Envoy Makes Statement on Iraqi Oil Smuggling

LD1008155096 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1130 GMT 10 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] According to Islamic Republic News Agency [IRNA], Dr. Kamal Kharrazi, Iranian permanent representative at the United Nations, has rejected, on Friday, 9 August, the new U.S. claim that Iraq's oil is being smuggled through Iranian coastal waters. The U.S. representative claimed at the UN Security Council meeting, on Thursday, 8 August, that ships carrying illegal Iraqi oil cargos enter Iranian coastal waters at the northern head of the Persian Gulf, pass behind the naval forces of the allies and enter international waters again at the southern part of the Gulf. The U.S. representative claimed that this operation is carried out with Iran's knowledge and consent, for which it charges the smugglers a certain amount of money.

This new U.S. claim is made in line with the recent round of U.S. political and propaganda invasion against the Islamic Republic of Iran. In order to justify what they call the implementation of their economic sanctions against Iran, the U.S. political bosses have for some years, and in particular during this past year, made numerous baseless accusations against Iran. The new claim of Iran smuggling Iraqi oil is no exception to this baseless campaign. Like other U.S. fabrications, this accusation is also without any single proof.

As Dr. Kharrazi said, this is another link in a chain of proofs of Washington's dirty propaganda campaign against the Islamic Republic. Iran has announced its opposition to any breach of UN-sponsored economic sanctions against Iraq a number of times before and to prove this it has increased its coast guard supervision and control on the waters of Arvand Rud and the northern outlets of the Persian Gulf.

Meanwhile, Iran has reported to the United Nations registered cases of violations of the Iraq blockade and presented the necessary documents to the special committee in charge of those sanctions. Of such cases is the abuse by smugglers of the Iranian flag to transport illegal Iraqi cargos. This was actually reported to the responsible UN authorities in December 1994. The Islamic Republic of Iran, while strongly denying the recent U.S. accusation, has announced in case the special UN Security Council committee decides to officially look into the situation, Iran is absolutely ready to once more prove the falsehood of the U.S. accusations.

In any case, it should be noted that such desperate U.S. struggles, which aim at covering up recent efforts by that country to step up economic pressures against Iran, are absolutely incompetent and from the experts' point of view can only be tagged as reactionary hopeless moves which will only leave the U.S. regime tired and exhausted in the end.

Iran: Paper Lauds Syria's Stand Against Israel's Netanyahu

LD1008104096 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 7 Aug 96 p 2

[Unattributed Editorial: "Outcome of Cairo Conference Should Be Preserved"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Zionist Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu has recently come up with a proposal called 'Lebanon-First' on the pretext of paving the way for the resumption of the so-called peace talks with Arab countries. According to the proposal, Israel would withdraw its troops from Lebanon as the first stage of a peace deal with Damascus. As it seems, in proposing the new option, the Zionist official has been prompted by his deep concern over issues relating to south Lebanon.

Netanyahu, who deems resolving the Lebanese issue essential to resumption of peace talks, announced in Amman, the Jordanian capital, on Monday [5 August] that he was prepared to hold dialogs with Syria regarding the peace process, aiming to present a peace-seeking front to the world. Syria, however, well aware of the Zionist regime's real intentions, described the proposal as 'hollow and hardly serious'.

Indeed, contrary to the Zionist prime minister's overture of peace, the Israeli artillery has continued to pound the villages in south Lebanon and Israeli gunboats during the recent days violated the Lebanese coastal waters and opened fire on some local fishing boats.

It is crystal clear that Netanyahu's recent statement does not signal a u-turn in the Zionist government's hardline policies, which he outlined during his electoral campaign and emphasized three 'nos', particularly the 'no' to 'land for peace'. Hence, the Zionist prime minister's recent move can only be construed as buying time by manipulating the Arab leaders, who decided on a solid united stand against the Zionist regime at the Cairo Conference. In other words, the move has been intended as an antidote to the decision made by the Arab leaders in Cairo.

Undoubtedly, establishing permanent peace between the Arab countries and the Zionist regime depends on the implementation of the UN resolutions issued in this regard, especially the Resolution 425, and the return of the occupied lands to Arab countries. Thus, holding bilateral talks with some Arab countries and adopting tactics of this sort by the Zionists are only aimed at creating divergence and rift among the Arab countries.

Consequently, Syria's insistence that the Zionist regime should return the occupied lands, including the strategic Golan heights, in return for peace is highly laudable and serves as a token of a firm united stand in the Arab world.

Iran: Official on Other States' 'Destructive Role' in Afghanistan

LD1008191696 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in English 1230 GMT 10 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Excerpt] Iran's foreign policy towards neighboring countries is based on peace, calm, and good-neighborly relations. Border guards can play an important role in connection with these aims. Ala'eddin Borujerdi, the deputy foreign minister of Iran for Asia and Pacific, who was speaking at a meeting of police border guards in Mashhad in the east of Iran, described as successful Iran's policy of ending the civil war in Afghanistan. He said that some countries played a destructive role in Afghanistan, and that they tried to realize their interests by the continuation of the current situation. [passage omitted]

Iran: Daily on Need To Publicize 'Economic Revolution'

NC0908174596 Mashhad KHORASAN in Persian 1 Aug 96 p 5

[Unattributed commentary: "Providing Information to Public Opinion"]

[FBIS Translated Text] Some time ago, in his meeting with members of the headquarters for organizing the Government Week ceremonies, President Hashemi-Rafsanjani made some very important remarks regarding the need to give accurate information to the people. He said: "Keeping the public informed is one of the biggest factors for a country to be proud of; it is the right of the people, and one of the most important necessities of today." "A people's awareness of the great successes and progress of the Islamic system inspires a society to have hope and joy for its future."

He had stated: "An understanding of the all-encompassing effects of construction and reconstruction is a sacred and valuable thing for the people; most of the negative judgments and spiteful propaganda have been amended or neutralized." "The current propaganda in Iran is devoid of the requisite scope and succinctness."

These emphatic remarks by the highest executive authority of the country on the need to convey accurate information to the people in fact defines a long-term strategy for the mass media and information organs.

In fact, along with providing details of the extensive developmental and economic operations underway and of the government's completion heavy infrastructural plans and projects all over the country, the people should also be enlightened regarding the positive effects and outcome of these projects and investments.

Meanwhile, institutions and ministries (especially the public relations departments) and all the mass communications media, including radio, television, and the press, should play a fundamental role.

Close cooperation among the media and the government clearly promises a bright and optimistic future for all sections of Iranian society.

The president's allusion to "negative judgments and spiteful propaganda" can be ascribed to foreign elements as well as some of our domestic friends, who are deliberately or inadvertently ignoring information on the massive developmental projects in Iran and gladly keep quiet about such optimistic prospects.

Developments in the our country's economy, industry, and agriculture in the course of the First [Five-Year] Plan and the first few years of the Second Plan are so unprecedented in the history of Iran that we can call it an "economic revolution."

In such circumstances, the responsibility and mission of the mass media is more crucial than ever before. Timely and appropriate information about events and developments is "the right of the people."

Utilization of the correct modes of wholesome propaganda, of course without any embellishments or fanciful overstatements of the actual facts in news and reports pertaining to our country's development, can be instrumental in enlightening and convincing the public of the constructive role of these projects.

Of course, one should not place all the responsibility on the shoulders of the media, as the relevant officials should also provide statistics and performance details. They should open the information door to the media and be actively involved in this momentous function. This is something in which they have been rather lackluster so far, and it is hoped that some fundamental steps will now be taken to rectify it.

Iran: Interior Minister—Majles By-Elections Expected in December

LD0908201896 Tehran RESALAT in Persian 4 Aug 96 p 2

[Unattributed report: "Majles By-Elections Will Be Carried Out in December"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] According to a report from Rasht, the interior minister has announced that the Islamic Consultative Majles by-elections in those constituencies where the elections have been deferred will probably take place in Azar [month beginning 21 November].

Interior Minister 'Ali Mohammad Besharati, returning from his two-day visit to Gilan Province, told reporters: As a result of the resignation of the deputy for Zanjan, a new date for by-elections will be set, probably mid Azar.

Concerning security in the country, he said: Islamic Iran has borders stretching to 8,755 km and it has sovereignty over all those borders. [passage omitted]

Iran: Daily Deems Debate on Presidential Election Premature

LD1008094996 Tehran KAYHAN INTERNATIONAL in English 4 Aug 96 p2

[Editorial article by Yusef Gh. Gharavi: "Presidential Election Debate Premature"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] In the past few weeks, the issue of the next presidential elections was raised by various

English as well as Farsi newspapers, and in the course of the political debate on who will be the nation's next president, some political experts and prominent figures expressed their views on the subject.

There is no doubt that the position the chief executive occupies in the framework of the Islamic Republic's constitution is very sensitive. The high executive power vested in the president leaves him as the sole top official in the political hierarchy, after the leader of the Islamic Revolution and Vali-e Faqih, to bear the huge and wide-ranging responsibilities of governing the country.

Undoubtedly, the wide debate on the presidential elections as well as the candidates proposed is an indication of the growing political knowledge on the subject in the various strata of the society. But it should be mentioned that the debate on the presidential elections in our country, indeed, is premature at this stage, irrespective of other factors, at the national and international level, and we should remind our colleagues in the profession that there is at least one year to go before the current term of the president ends.

In fact, the outcome of the campaign for recently-held Majles elections clearly had a bearing on national politics as some sections of the media tried to put this issue in the political agenda of the presidential elections.

On the other hand, it should be clearly stated that the question raised by some sections of the media whether the future president should be a cleric or a non-cleric, is essentially a non-issue. In fact, making such a demarcation in an Islamic establishment, in the long-term will have adverse consequences.

We should bear in mind that our Islamic country has its own characteristics, which have to be viewed in the proper perspective and which requires some political wisdom to grasp.

One more point in respect of the regional and international implications of an early debate on the presidential elections is that it may encourage regional countries to raise some questions in regard to the continuity of the present foreign policy during the next term and so on.

In fact, this is not to undermine the high responsibilities of the media which has been protected by the constitution, but to underline the fact that only timely debate on a highly sensitive issue like the presidential elections will yield the desired results as far as the overall national interests and political wisdom are concerned.

Iran: Atlanta Decision Shows Need for Representation in IWF

LD1008104396 Tehran TEHRAN TIMES in English 5 Aug 96 p 2

[Unattributed Editorial: "Strong Representation in IWF a Necessity"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] A controversy arising from ill judgement overshadowed the wrestling competitions on the first day of the Atlanta Olympic Wrestling finals on Wednesday [31 July] when American wrestler, Kurt Angle, was announced the winner versus Iran's 'Abbas Jadidi in the 100-kg category.

At the end of the eight-minute bout between the two wrestlers, which went into overtime, the scores of the two wrestlers were 1-1. During the bout, Jadidi executed a double leg take down, but was not given any point by the judge. At the end of the bout, Jadidi raised his arms in victory while Angle, well aware of his low profile performance, sank to his knees crying.

Most experts agreed that Jadidi was the clear winner. The German coach Gerhard Weisenberger, who had watched the bout, said, "the referee made a big mistake. He should have cautioned the American between the sixth and seventh minute. Then there would be no controversy."

Germany's Arawat Sabejew, who won the bronze, said, "I was not surprised when they announced Angle the winner. When you wrestle in America, you have to expect such a decision."

The statements of the experts indicate that the U.S. took advantage of its hosting the Olympic Games this year and deprived the young Iranian champion, who was indisputably superior, of a gold medal.

Following the contest, Jadidi said, "When the competition ended and the judges gathered together for a decision, I heard two of them give me victory but then the chief judge ordered them to give it to the American."

Although this is not the first time the U.S. resorts to deceitfulness, ignoring fair play, Iran, a country with a high status in the world wrestling competitions, should not hold a nonchalant attitude in this regard.

Iran must make every effort to get a proper representation in the International Wrestling Federation [IWF] in order to be able to protect the rights of its wrestlers, who well deserve to ascend the platform of championship with the sweat of their brow. Despite Jadidi's being deprived of a gold medal, Iran ranked third in the Atlanta Olympic Wrestling finals.

If Iranian sports authorities do not take proper measures today, the Iranian champions will fall victims to further unjust decisions in the future. That must not be allowed to happen.

Iran: Iranian's Wrestling Victory Frightened 'Arch-Satan'

LD1008142796 Tehran KEYHAN in Persian 4 Aug 96 p 14

[Commentary by Mohammad Emani: "A Message That Was Transmitted From Atlanta to the World Village"]

[FBIS Translated Excerpt] Two nights ago the arch-satan [United States] was saddened and wounded in his own home [in Atlanta]. I am talking about the wrestling match of a champion from the land of heroes [Iran], but not just about his proud victory against the Russian opponent. This victory was the prelude to the moment when we saw [Iranian gold medal winner] Rasul Khadem prostrate himself to thank God amidst the climax of bias and unfair treatment of the Iranian athletes. He bowed to worship God in order to materialize the lofty phrase of Imam Khomeyni, may God be satisfied with his deeds, that the Islamic revolution values should be exported through our innate behavior.

The present era is named the age of information explosion and the era of fragile glass borders in McLuhan's global village, an era in which the appearance of a new world order is inevitable. But according to the lord of the writers, martyr Avini, the interpretation of a global village does not necessarily mean the era of domination by the U.S.-Zionist hegemony. Their incapability to control the world telecommunication and information network has already brought them many sleepless nights.

The hegemonistic Western world should be concerned more about the new world order than us, for this order has been transmitted all over the world through the message of Islam. The fact that millions of American black Muslims staged a demonstration, while chanting the slogan of "God is great," proved that the message of the Islamic revolution has penetrated the heart of global arrogance. [passage omitted]

The victory of the Iranian champion was transmitted all over the world through advanced transmission networks, and this frightened the arch-satan more than anything else, for the champion's act of worship before the world television cameras foiled the allegations of the arch-satan. Let the frustrated gangsters call us terrorists. What else can one expect from desperate individuals? [passage omitted]

Iran: Additional Stocks To Be Allocated to Workers

LD1008112096 Tehran ABRAR in Persian 4 Aug 96 p 5

[News report: "Eighteen Million More Shares To Be Allocated to Workers"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The workers have so far received 24 million of the 42 million shares allocated to them. This was announced by Hoseyn Kamali, labor and social affairs minister, in an interview with the Central News Unit on Thursday [1 August]. He added: So far 429,527 workers in 127 factories and production centers all over the country have received these shares.

The minister went on: In accordance with a bill to allocate factory shares to workers, we will distribute 42 million shares among the workers. And by the end of Tir this year [21 July 1996], the workers will receive 24 million of the shares.

He announced that each worker can spend 5 million rials maximum to purchase shares; and added: The Labor and Social Affairs Ministry in the current year has opened an office in Tehran's Stock Exchange. This office gives free advice to the workers on the sale and purchase of these shares, and all its transactions are free of charge. The objective is to persuade the workers to hang on to their allocated shares and to prevent unregulated share dealings.

Pakistan

Pakistan: Bhutto Slams India for Obstructing CTBT

BK0908165096 Hong Kong AFP in English 1620 GMT 9 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] ISLAMABAD, Aug 9 (AFP) — Pakistan's Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto Friday [9 August] lashed out at India, accusing it of creating hurdles in the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) talks currently underway in Geneva.

Expressing concern over India's "negative attitude" toward the negotiations, aimed at securing a global moratorium on nuclear testing, she said "the forces creating hurdles in CTBT talks are being exposed."

"These forces do not want a solution to the proliferation issues," the official Associated Press of Pakistan (APP) quoted Bhutto as telling a news conference in the northwestern Pakistani city of Peshawar.

Pakistan has been cooperating for the multilateral or regional solution of the issue in the past and "we would continue to do so in future too," she said.

Her comments came as the Indian delegation in Geneva renewed its opposition to the treaty, claiming the draft was discriminatory.

The draft has been accepted by China while the other four declared nuclear powers — Britain, France, the United States and Russia — have also consented to it.

India says it would block the treaty unless the draft was modified.

Bhutto said unless India was brought on board, Pakistan would not feel it was in a position to sign the treaty, adding that Pakistan could never be oblivious to its defence needs.

On Thursday [8 August] she told a gathering in northern Pakistan that "tension prevails in the region because of India's ever increasing military buildup."

Referring to the situation in Kashmir — a dispute which has been the cause of the two wars between Pakistan and India in the past — she said there was no question of Pakistan signing the CTBT unless India did so too.

Pakistan: Sharif—No-War Pact With India Must Be Tied With Kashmir

BK1108074596 Islamabad THE MUSLIM in English 9 Aug 96 pp 1, 11

[Unattributed report]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] ISLAMABAD, Aug 8 (PPI) — President Pakistan Muslim League (N) [PML] and Leader of the Opposition Muhammad Nawaz Sharif has categorically declared that no-war pact with India is impossible and impracticalbe without resolving all issues with that country including Kashmir issue and ensuring all security requirements of Pakistan.

In a statement in Islamabad Thursday [8 August], he said he had adopted a clear-cut stance on signing the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) and proposal of no-war pact with India during his chat with newsmen in Islamabad on August 5 and his address to All-Party Conference on CTBT in Lahore on August 6 had made it clear that until Kashmir issue was resolved in accordance with resolutions, India removed deadly missiles from Pakistan borders, demands of disarmament were practically fulfilled and Pakistan's security concerns were removed, Pakistan must not sign the CTBT.

Nawaz Sharif said it was the well thought stand of the Pakistan Muslim League that "we should not link the matter of signing the CTBT with India". "We should have our own national policy on nuclear matters and even if India signs CTBT, Pakistan must not endorse the treaty until our above-mentioned conditions are met with" , said PML chief.

Referring to his press conference of August 7 in Karachi, Muhammad Nawaz Sharif said some newspapers published his answer to proposal of no-war pact with India out of context which might create misunderstandings in some minds.

He said it would have been appropriate if these newspapers published his reply with abovementioned solid preconditions for the no-war pact.

The Leader of the Opposition said Pakistan Muslim League's stand on the nuclear capability, the only guarantor to national security, was fully in accordance with the aspirations of the nation and security demands of the motherland. He recalled that in his policy speech in Washington on February 13 this year, he had said in unequivocal terms that India had subjected Pakistan to aggression thrice, it had also tested a nuclear device and had deployed deadly missiles on Pakistan's borders. Therefore, in that situation, Pakistan could not abandon its nuclear deterrent as the only answer to India's threat. The need of nuclear shield for Pakistan must be accepted. Muhammad Nawaz Sharif said Pakistan could not afford signing CTBT or a no-war pact with India without ignoring its security requirement. It would amount to committing suicide.

Pakistan: Bhutto Discusses Kashmir With Hank Brown

BK1108074496 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 1500 GMT 10 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] U.S. Senator Hank Brown called on Prime Minister in Islamabad today and held an in-depth discussion on regional and international issues with special reference to the Kashmir issue. Senator Brown, who recently visited the occupied Kashmir, referred to the troubled conditions and atrocities in the Kashmir valley and its impact on the population there. He hoped that India and Pakistan would hold a dialogue and that the Kashmir issue would be resolved through negotiations.

Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto thanked the senator for visiting Pakistan and briefed him on Pakistan's stand on the Kashmir dispute. She said the dispute is a constant threat to peace and stability to the region. She referred to the recent election drama in the occupied Kashmir and said only a plebiscite as laid down in the UN resolutions could resolve this issue.

Pakistan: President Meets U.S. Senator Brown, Discusses Kashmir

BK1208021296 Islamabad PTV Television Network in English 1300 GMT 11 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] President Farooq Ahmad Khan Leghari has said Pakistan wants to have a peaceful political solution of the Kashmir problem, which is a flash point between India and Pakistan and one of the oldest international issues in the world. He was talking to American Senator Mr. Hank Brown, who called on him at the Aiwan-i-Sadr [presidency] today. The president said Pakistan wants to resolve the Kashmir issue in accordance with the United Nations resolutions. He said the planned farcical Indian elections in Kashmir could not be a substitute for plebiscite in accordance with the wishes of Kashmiri people. He observed free and fair elections were not possible in the presence of ever increasing number of Indian troops and grave violations of human rights in Kashmir, which had alienated the entire Kashmiri population. The president said Pakistan wants to have peace and development and was against an arms race in the region. India was, however, continuing with production of its nuclear capable missiles threatening peace and stability in the entire region, the president remarked.

Pakistan: Bhutto Claims $30 Billion Investment During PPP Tenure

BK1008130696 Islamabad THE NEWS in English 9 Aug 96 p 12

[Report by Samar Gul and M. Alam]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Lakki Marwat — Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto said Thursday [8 August] that her government's bold investment policies have helped bring in $30 billion worth of foreign investment while deals worth $22 billion have already been struck with different companies.

She was talking to newsmen after inaugurating Lakki Cement here.

Comparing performance of her government with that of Nawaz Sharif's Benazir said the total investment made in Pakistan during the only. "These are our attractive Policies which enabled local and foreign investors to come to Pakistan and invest their capital," she said.

Earlier, while congratulating Federal Minister Anwar Saifullah and chairman Lakki Cement, Sheikh Razzaq, the Prime Minister said the factory would provide direct and indirect employment opportunities to 16,000 people and help the area's unemployment problem.

She said the installation of the Plant was no less than a miracle accomplished by Shaikh Razzaq, Saifullah brothers and holders in a record time of 25 months.

The installation of the factory, she said, was the best example of Pak-China friendship.

Chief minister, NWFP [North-West Frontier Province], Aftab Sherpao, Governor Maj Gen (Retd) Khurshid Ali Khan, Federal Ministers Anwar Saifullah, Nawaz Khokar, Mzal Khan, Seth Razzaq and Salim and Kulsoom Saifullabs were also Present on the occasion. The Prime Minister said the most heartening aspect of Lucky Cement was that it has been built in private sector on 100 per cent equity basis as no loan or credit was taken from any financial institution.

To questions, the Prime Minister said that work on expansion of Dera Ismail Khan airport would start soon. About the slow pace of work on Phase Three of Chashma Right Bank Canal she directed Federal Minister Anwar Saifullah to remind her the same in the next cabinet meeting. Earlier, the premier formally inaugurated the huge cement plant by unveiling the foundation plaque and pushing the switch in the fully computerised centeral controle room.

Later she left for Sadrawan village near Bannu to attend a lunch hosted in her honour by Senator Malik Faridullah Khan.

Pakistan: Bhutto Comments on CTBT, Afghanistan, Other Issues

BK0908145196 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1400 GMT 9 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Addressing a news conference in Peshawar this evening, Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto said her government plans to establish a revolutionary local body system in the country to improve the social fabric of society. Under the system, some nonpolitical respectable persons would be elected in villages and decide the local petty cases. As such, the people would get rid of police stations and lengthy court procedures.

About the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty [CTBT], she again stated Pakistan wanted multilateral and global solution of this problem. She declared Pakistan would not sign the CTBT unilaterally.

About the no-war pact with India, the prime minister said Kashmir is the root cause of tension between the two countries and if it is solved in accordance with the UN resolutions, then there will be no need of any such pact.

On Afghanistan, she said Pakistan favors the setting up of a consensus government in that country which should be acceptable to all groups. She said Pakistan wants to reopen its mission in Kabul as soon as peace and security is restored there.

Responding to a question about the National Finance Commission awards, the prime minister said a special development fund should be created with the consultation of provinces so that the backward areas may get more money for their development. She said her government is making all-out efforts to minimize the prices of essential items like sugar, ata [flour], and ghee [butter oil].

Replying to a question about reforms package for tribal areas, the prime minister said it would be announced as soon as the situation in Afghanistan is improved.

Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto renewed talks offer to the leader of the opposition in the National Assembly on national issues and said the government wanted to hash out solutions to all the problems with consensus. Addressing a function after inaugurating a 500-kv grid station at Sheikh Mohammadi on the outskirts of Peshawar today, the prime minister regretted that the opposition had never responded positively to the initiation of talks offered by her government in the past. The government wanted to take along the opposition on issues of national importance. Democracy has been restored in the country, therefore the opposition should come on talks table, so that viable solution could be thrashed out to the matters facing the country.

The prime minister divulged at length on the achievements made during the past three years and said for the first time in the history of the country, this government had started repaying foreign loans in order to reduce debt servicing and provided stability to the economy of the country. Efforts are on to rid the country of debt servicing. The prime minister said flow of foreign investment in the country had increased manifold during the last three years and so far 21 billion rupees agreements have been signed and three foreign investment companies had started investment in various fields. She said the present government during the past three years had enhanced the image of the country among comity of nations, as now Pakistan's principled stand on various issues was being heard and due weightage was given to its views on global issues. The prime minister said for the first time in OIC's [Organization of the Islamic Conference's] conference at Casablanca, a unanimous resolution in the shape of Casablanca declaration was adopted regarding peaceful settlement of the Kashmir dispute in accordance with the UN resolutions. She said her government had taken stringent measures for eradication of the menace of corruption from the society and added that a commission had been set up which would publish the names of loan defaulters in the national press. She said our hands are clean and we have been acquitted from all such kinds of allegations leveled against us.

Pakistan: Further on Bhutto's Remarks on Kashmir, Afghanistan

BK1008113296 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 0200 GMT 10 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto has said that the relations between Pakistan and India cannot not be normalized until the Kashmir issue, which is the cause of tension between the two countries, is settled. Addressing a news conference in Peshawar yesterday evening [9 August], she referred to the exchange of letters with her Indian counterpart and said Pakistan has made its stand on Kashmir clear in these letters. She said we have supported the Kashmiri people and will go on supporting them in the future also. Bhutto said Pakistan has always supported national independence movements the world over, as this is an important element of its foreign policy. In this connection, she referred to Pakistan's support to the independence movements in various African, and other, countries.

In reply to a question about convening an Islamic conference to settle the Afghan crisis, the prime minister said Pakistan had always raised the issue at Islamic conferences. It had been agreed upon that a government acceptable to the people of Afghanistan should be formed in that country. Pakistan expects an extraordinary summit of Islamic countries in March next year, and a regular session of the OIC [Organization of the Islamic Conference] will be held in December 1997 in Iran. She said Pakistan has been making political and diplomatic efforts toward the settlement of the Afghan issue. Islamic summit conferences and Islamic foreign ministers conferences contributed their efforts toward solving the issue during the presence of Soviet troops in Afghanistan. She said that recently, the Islamic summit conference at Casablanca issued a declaration on Kashmir. There has always been consensus on all issues pertaining to the Muslim world, including Palestine, Afghanistan, and Kashmir.

Pakistan: 'High-Powered' Afghan Delegation Arrives on Visit

BK1008105996 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Overseas Service in English 0800 GMT 10 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] A five-member high-powered Afghan delegation arrived in Islamabad on a three-day official visit to Pakistan. During the visit, it will discuss trade, economic and other matters with Pakistani authorities. The delegation is led by the Afghan interior minister, Mr. Yonus Qanuni, and includes the finance minister, the deputy foreign minister, the deputy commerce minister, and a special representative of the Afghan prime minister.

The Afghan interior minister told the newsmen that the delegation has come to seek ways to improve relations with Pakistan by thrashing the modalities to remove misunderstanding between Islamabad and Kabul. About specific issues to be discussed with the Pakistani authorities, he said that the agenda includes trade ties, economic matters, and political issues as well. They would also discuss reopening of the Pakistan Embassy in Kabul. He said there should be no concern over it that the Kabul Government will take steps for the embassy's protection. He hoped that their visit would culminate in improved relations between the two countries.

Pakistan: Afghan Delegation Speaks of Setting Up 'Supreme Council'

BK1108075096 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in Urdu 1500 GMT 10 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The visiting Afghan delegation headed by Interior Minister Mohammad Yonus Qanuni today held talks in Islamabad with the Pakistani authorities on the supply of food items and petroleum from Pakistan. In light of Afghanistan's request, Pakistan expressed readiness to provide facilities to transport the items via Pakistan that the Afghan Government has decided to import from foreign countries. Pakistan has also agreed as a goodwill gesture to supply the requested items from local markets to meet the urgent need of the Kabul population. Pakistan has also agreed to seriously consider the Afghan proposal for reopening its embassy in Kabul.

Pakistan emphasized that it wants to maintain contacts with all factions in Afghanistan and is desirous of starting negotiations of Afghan groups to create a consensus among the Afghan people for a lasting solution of the Afghan issue. The Afghan delegation described in details their proposal for setting up a Supreme Council [preceding two words in English]. Power will be transferred to this Supreme Council which will later be responsible for holding general elections to establish a Grand Assembly [Loya Jerga]. The Afghan delegation highly commended Pakistan for its unflinching stand during the Afghan jehad and continuous assistance to the 1.5 million Afghan refugees in Pakistan. The delegation requested continued cooperation from Pakistan for the restoration of peace and stability in Afghanistan. Pakistan's delegation, which was led by V.A. Jaffery, adviser to prime minister on finance and economic affairs, comprised of representatives from the ministries of foreign affairs, trade, petroleum and natural resources, food and agriculture, and frontier region.

Earlier, the Afghan interior minister told newsmen on arrival in Islamabad that his delegation is visiting Pakistan to remove some misunderstandings between Pakistan and Afghanistan and thrash modalities to improve relations with Pakistan.

Pakistan: Afghan Delegation Meets With President Leghari

LD1108180796 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 11 Aug 96

[FBIS Translated Text] The Afghan delegation headed by the esteemed Interior Minister Mohammad Yonus Qanuni, which is currently paying a goodwill visit to Islamabad, met Pakistani President Farooq Ahmad Leghari this morning.

BAKHTAR reported that during the meeting the Pakistani president greeted the Afghan delegation and spoke about cultural, religious, and historic relations between the people of the two countries which had been enriched further during the jehad of the Afghan people. The esteemed Leghari placed emphasis on efforts to normalize relations between the two countries, on the need for the restoration of peace and stability in Afghanistan, on the vast opportunities that exist for bilateral economic cooperation and on the need for fraternal and friendly relations to achieve cooperation.

On the resumption of normal diplomatic relations between Afghanistan and Pakistan, the esteemed Leghari said: Pakistan's Foreign Secretary Minister Najmuddin Shaikh is planning to visit Kabul at the end of August to assess the possibility of reopening Pakistan's embassy.

Recalling Pakistan's support during the jehad and struggle of the people of Afghanistan, the esteemed Qanuni conveyed the good wishes of the Afghan leadership to his excellency Leghari and presented to him a message of goodwill from the esteemed President Borhanoddin Rabbani.

The head of the Afghan delegation said: In the light of the new political atmosphere, especially the emergence of the peace axis, the Afghan leadership wishes resolutely and cordially to improve bilateral relations with Pakistan in a positive direction in order to revive mutual trust and good-neighborly relations. The esteemed Qanuni added: The main aim of the Afghan delegation's visit to Islamabad is to improve and normalize relations with Pakistan. He expressed the hope that the goodwill of Afghanistan would be reciprocated by Pakistan.

Sri Lanka

Sri Lanka: Report Details LTTE's 'Threat' for U.S. To Remain Neutral

BK1208040396 Colombo DAILY NEWS in English
11 Aug 96

[Report by S. Selvakumar — received via Internet]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam [LTTE] have denounced the United States Government for what the rebel movement says is the USA's support for the Sri Lankan Government and have made a veiled threat of taking the war to the US if that country continues that assistance.

An editorial comment in the latest issue of the movement's official newspaper VIDUTHALAI PULIGAL also protests the recent condemnation of the Tigers by the US Government.

The PULIGAL, in its editorial, demands that the US "abandons its stand of supporting only the government of Sri Lanka." In what could be interpreted as a veiled threat against Washington, the PULIGAL warns that "if the US continues to provide aid to the Government's war effort, it will not only further complicate the Sinhala-Tamil issue, but it will also help expand the war actions."

The editorial calls on the US to approach the Sri Lankan ethnic conflict impartially and diplomatically and to take whatever measures to bring about peace.

The PULIGAL claims that Washington has not been non-partisan in its pronouncements on the ethnic conflict. "The United States is a country which advocates human rights and global peace but singles out for condemnation the Tamil struggle and the war between the Sri Lankan Government and the Tigers," PULIGAL says.

"The main reason for this mistaken approach of the United States is the failure of the country to understand the history of the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka," the editorial observes.

Sri Lanka: President Kumaratunga Discusses Upcoming Visit to ROK

SK1108050596 Seoul TONG-A ILBO in Korean
10 Aug 96 p 5

[Interview with Sri Lankan President Chandrika Bandaranaike by Yon Kuk-hui, editor of the International Department of TONG-A ILBO, in Colombo; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] [Yon] What is the purpose of your visit to the ROK?

[Kumaratunga] Sri Lanka and the ROK have maintained close relations for a long time. Such relations are based on solid political and economic cooperation. In the economic sector, the ROK has provided Sri Lanka with considerable low-interest long-term loans, and has become an important economic partner. In the private sector, the ROK has the largest number of companies in Sri Lanka than in other foreign countries. Under such circumstances, I intend to further the friendly and cooperative relations through my visit to the ROK.

[Yon] What benefits does Sri Lanka offer to foreign investors compared to neighboring countries?

[Kumaratunga] Geographically, Sri Lanka is in the middle of the Far East and Middle East. Historically, Sri Lanka has been the stopover spot for people traveling from Europe to the Far East, or vice versa. Sri Lanka has a large market, and it a gateway to the Indian peninsula. There are 300 million middle class people with purchasing power in India and neighboring countries. Sri Lanka adopts a regulation-free market economy so that companies can freely conduct economic activities. Our rich work force is comparatively highly educated but low in cost. Many foreign countries have invested here, creating approximately 400,000 jobs.

[Yon] Recently, the Tamil rebels intensified their offensive in the northern areas. ROK and other foreign companies feel unsafe. How is Sri Lanka handling this issue? Do you have any special plans to protect foreign companies?

[Kumaratunga] We are handling the issue in two ways. First, we are trying to build peace through dialogue. We plan to revise the constitution and make Sri Lanka a federation that will embrace them. The Parliament is reviewing the bill. However, if the Tamil rebels reject our efforts to build peace, and continue with their show of force, we cannot but take military countermeasures. The Tamil rebels are a small number of guerrillas occupying portions of the three northern provinces. We have thoroughly sealed off these areas to prevent them from escaping. With a view to winning international support, they do not attack foreigners. However, it is true they are trying to alienate foreign investors.

[Yon] I understand you have consumed much national strength in armed countermeasures against the Tamil rebels. What is the status? What are your other tasks?

[Kumaratunga] Unfortunately, we have spent much money on defense. The road to peace is still open. In addition to the rebels, economic issues are also a major task. Economic construction has been slowed by defense spending. There are also factors beyond my control. Drought, for example. We suffered much from drought this spring. We depend greatly on hydroelectric power for energy. The power supply was frequently suspended due to drought. Another serious problem is unemployment. But I believe we can overcome these difficulties. I am certain such trials do not last forever.

Sri Lanka: Parliament Approves Motion To Extend State of Emergency

BK0908122496 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 9 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The motion to extend the state of emergency has been passed in parliament by a majority of 30 votes. One hundred and eighteen MP's voted for the motion and 88 voted against it.

Winding up the debate, Deputy Minister of Defense General Anuruddha Ratwatte said that he would pledge on behalf of the president to restore lasting peace in the country by ending the war in the North and East. He categorically stated that the government would never deviate from the war efforts in spite of incidents such as the attack on Mullaittivu. All should act in a responsible manner at this decisive moment. He disclosed that the president had been away from the island at the time of the Mullaittivu attack and that he had not taken oath before the prime minister as he was involved on the war front.

Sri Lanka: Radio Reports Heavy Fighting on Outskirts of Kilinochchi

BK0908122896 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 9 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Heavy fighting was reported from the outskirts of Kilinochchi town yesterday as soldiers engaged in the [Operation] Sathjaya offensive retaliated against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam [LTTE] mortar and RPG [Rocket-Propelled Grenade] attacks. Military Spokesman Brigadier Sarath Munasinghe told the weekly press briefing that soldiers backed by tanks, artillery, and air cover were about 1 km away from the Kilinochchi city limits and nearly 8 km from Elephant Pass as the operations entered its 14th day. The troops are facing LTTE resistance and removing anti-tank and anti-personnel mines.

He said that the LTTE had announced the Tiger death toll as 182, but they believed it should be higher like 300 and that is without considering air and artillery attacks. Three officers and 45 soldiers have been killed so far during this military drive. Sixty-seven soldiers have been wounded.

The Air Force continues to support the ground troops with direct hits on identified LTTE targets. Brigadier Munasinghe said that a newly-built LTTE base in (Murugandy), south of Kilinochchi, suffered heavy damage as a result of aerial attacks. He said that their aim was to draw and kill the terrorists and are happy if they keep coming toward them.

Operation Sathjaya was launched on July 26 from Elephant Pass. The troops soon captured the strategic town of Paranthan, from which the second phase of the operation was launched on August 4th. In reply to a question raised by a journalist, Brigadier Munasinghe said that the Army was not involved in stopping food lorries going toward Kilinochchi. However, the actual situation was that the lorries which have gone beyond Vavuniya have not returned and the LTTE is not releasing the lorries.

Sri Lanka: LTTE Blamed for Bomb Explosion at Hindu Temple

BK1208061896 Hong Kong AFP in English 0609 GMT 12 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] COLOMBO, Aug 1 (AFP) — A bomb explosion blamed on Tamil Tiger guerrillas ripped through a Hindu temple in eastern Sri Lanka on Sunday [11 August] night, wounding 33 worshippers and four policemen, officials said Monday [12 August].

The bomb went off at the town of Batticaloa during a festival at the temple, officials said, adding that they believed the Tamil Tigers carried out the attack.

"The Tigers are trying to de-stabilise the area and that is why they resort to this type of attack to create a feeling of insecurity among the people," a military spokesman here said.

Troops established control over the eastern region four years ago confining the rebels to the northern province. However, with the fall of the guerrillas' northern citadel of Jaffna, the militants have stepped up attacks in the east.

Meanwhile, fighting continued between government troops and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) outside the northern town of Kilinochchi for the ninth straight day Monday [12 August], officials said.

The LTTE said their resistance prevented security forces taking the town of Kilinochchi, where the rebels have maintained their political headquarters after being driven out of the Jaffna peninsula, further to the north.

"The Sri Lankan military has been making a desperate bid to occupy more Tamil homeland by capturing Kilinochchi," the Tigers said in a statement issued from their London office.

Defence sources confirmed that ferocious counter attacks by the Tigers had bogged down government soldiers despite the use of artillery guns and close air support from helicopter gun ships and Kfir super sonic jets. The Tigers had said that aerial bombardments had reduced Kilinochchi to rubble with virtually every concrete structure damaged. Some 200,000 civilians in the area have fled further southwards.

Official figures show that 50 soldiers were killed and 70 wounded since troops mounted their latest offensive to take Kilinochchi eight days ago. The military estimates that over 300 rebels were killed.

However, the Tigers said they lost only 51 fighters killed and placed military losses at more than 100 killed. The Tigers said more than 30 civilians died in long-range attacks of the army.

Sri Lanka: 'Around 30' Militants Killed in Naval Battle

BK1008115796 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 10 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Around 30 Sea Tigers have been killed in the battle of the Navy off the coast of the Mullaittivu District. The confrontation began when naval craft detected a flotilla of terrorist boats moving toward Chalai. The largest terrorist vessel was completely destroyed when the patrol boats opened fire. The three other Tiger boats escaped, but are believed to have been badly damaged. The Operational Headquarters of the Defense Ministry says that at least 12 Sea Tigers were wounded in the confrontation. One sailor also sustained injuries.

Troops of Operation Sathjaya have consolidated their defenses north of Karadipokku in the Kilinochchi District. The Defense Ministry says that the LTTE [Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam] kept up mortar attacks on security forces positions. Troops retaliated with artillery fire while the Air Force attacked Tiger units. One soldier was killed and three others wounded in yesterday's fighting.

Sri Lanka: Japanese Vessel Crew Unhurt; 12 Militants Killed in Clash

BK1008121596 Colombo Sri Lanka Broadcasting Corporation International Service in English 1045 GMT 10 Aug 96

[FBIS Transcribed Text] The terrorists attempted to blow up a Japanese merchant vessel at Pulmoddai in the Trincomalee District yesterday. The vessel, the Princess Wave, was damaged by the explosive device, but is now being repaired by the Sri Lanka Navy. Nine civilians who were loading the ship were injured in the blast. One of the victims is in a critical condition. The crew comprising 22 foreigners escaped unhurt.

Meanwhile, 12 more terrorists were killed and many others wounded in an incident at Mavemali, south of Kallar in the Trincomalee District. The incident occurred yesterday when a road picket party sent from the Kallar detachment was attacked by a group of terrorists. Reinforcements from the Kallar detachment were sent in to help the ground troops. The troops retaliated effectively. According to the Operational Headquarters, during a subsequent search one terrorist body was recovered along with an automatic rifle. One officer and seven soldiers were killed in action and six were wounded. The casualties were evacuated to the Trincomalee Hospital.

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